



| **UF QUEST** |

## **Overview, History and Implementation**

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## Preface

This report has been prepared by Andrew Wolpert, Associate Professor of Classics and Director of UF Quest. He holds a BA in Ancient Greek from Franklin and Marshall College, an MA in Classical Studies from the University of Michigan, and a PhD in the Committee on the Ancient Mediterranean World from the University of Chicago. He taught first in the Department of the Classics at Harvard University and then jointly in the Department of Classics and the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin before joining the faculty of the University of Florida. Wolpert has written extensively on questions concerning the politics, society, and culture of classical Athens, and he has led the way in applying theories from memory studies to research on ancient Greece and Rome.

From 2012-2019, Wolpert was the director of UF's common course, "What is the Good Life," required of all first-time-in-college students before the development of the UF Quest program. He chaired the Humanities Steering Committee, tasked with the annual assessment of "What is the Good Life," and he was responsible for implementing changes to the course recommended by the committee. He promoted the use of digital technologies and experiential learning activities to enhance course instruction. He worked with directors and curators at the Harn Museum of Art, the Florida Museum of Natural History, the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, and the Constans Theatre to offer performances and exhibits that explored themes, topics, and works studied in the course.

Since 2019, Wolpert has served as the inaugural Director of UF Quest and has led faculty in the implementation of the UF Quest program. Drawing on the best pedagogical practices and research methods, UF Quest seeks to spark student curiosity, encourage them to explore new academic and research opportunities, and examine critically the challenges that we are facing today. During Wolpert's directorship, faculty have developed more than 200 new courses so UF Quest could be taught to over 12,000 students per year on a wide range of topics in the arts, humanities, social & behavioral sciences, and the biological and physical sciences.

For nearly fifteen years, hundreds of faculty members at the University of Florida have engaged in a collaborative effort to reimagine the general education curriculum. They are owed an enormous debt of gratitude for serving on the various task forces, working groups, and committees that have developed and implemented the UF Core and UF Quest programs and for teaching UF Core and UF Quest courses. Special thanks goes to the following individuals for their herculean efforts in bringing this shared vision to fruition and for their suggestions on this report: Angela Lindner, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs; Brenda Smith, Associate Professor of Music, Quest 1 Director; Alison Reynolds, Associate Director of the Writing Program, Quest 1 Director; Derek Farnsworth, Associate Professor of Food and Resource Economics, Quest 2 Director; Selman Herschfield, Professor of Physics, Quest 2 Director; John Krigbaum, Professor of Anthropology, Quest 2 Director; and Rick Stepp, Professor of Anthropology, Quest 3 Director. Katherine Beckett, Allyson Haskell, Maddy Henry, Kendall Kroger, and Sean Ochal created the graphs for the enrollment and course development data and the visual for the Quest milestones. Finally, the following associate deans from the participating colleges have provided support, guidance, and patience throughout the entire process: James Babanikos, Joel Brendemuhl, Peggy Carr, Abdul Chini, Nancy Clark, Christopher Janelle, Christopher McCarty, David Pharies, Edward Schaefer, Jennifer Setlow, Tina Smith-Bonahue, Trysh Travis, Nancy Waldron, and Michael Weigold.

Gainesville, FL  
June 22, 2023

## Overview of UF Quest

UF Quest is a shared, sequential general education program that provides students the opportunity to take interdisciplinary courses that connect to and go beyond their major, find solutions to the problems we are confronting today, and engage in practical real-world experiences and research opportunities that will prepare them for their future careers.

## Principles, Goals, and Values

## Exploration of Essential and Pressing Questions

- Draw connections across disciplines
- Focus on qualitative and quantitative reasoning
- Teach students how to think, not what to believe

## Application of the Best Practices in Teaching

- Apply innovative approaches and methods, grounded in the academic rigor of the individual disciplines
- Offer small classes and maintain a high level of faculty engagement
- Create opportunities for active and experiential learning

## Forward Facing

- Embrace change and uncertainty
- Prepare students for the rigor of college
- Provide students with the skills needed for lifelong learning



### Quest 1 and Quest 2 at a Glance

#### Course Development

- 118 Quest 1 courses
- 100 Quest 2 courses

#### Faculty Participation

- Over 200 faculty
- 60 departments and schools, 7 colleges, 2 centers

#### Student Enrollment

- Over 12,000 in 2022-2023 academic year

#### Examples of Quest 1 and Quest 2 Courses

- Medicine, Science, and the Dawn of Reason
- Wisdom and Heroism: Great Books in the Medieval World
- Feeding a Hungry Planet
- Energy and Society

#### Examples of Active and Experiential Learning Assignments

- Conducting interviews
- Performing field observations and scientific experiments
- Participating in mock community meetings and debates

### Quest 1 Experience

Undergraduates are required to take one Quest 1 course to fulfill three credits of the general education requirement in the humanities. Unlike typical first-year offerings, Quest 1 courses extend beyond any one discipline. They are not a survey of or an introduction to a field. Instead, they invite students to examine essential questions about the human condition that are difficult to answer and hard to ignore. What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? In Quest 1, students come to terms with the underlying ambiguities and uncertainties of the many problems that we are confronting.

### Quest 1 Student Learning Outcomes

**Content:** Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.

**Critical Thinking:** Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition, using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.

**Communication:** Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.

**Connection:** Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.

## Quest 2 Experience

After completing a Quest 1 course, students next take a Quest 2 course to fulfill three credits of general education requirement in the biological sciences, the physical sciences, or the social and behavioral sciences. Quest 2 courses engage students in thought-provoking general education coursework that builds on and expands upon their Quest 1 experience in the humanities. Where Quest 1 courses ask what it means, Quest 2 courses ask what we can do. In Quest 2, students encounter important real-world issues that cut across disciplines. Quest 2 foregrounds active learning experiences and helps students develop concrete skills in critical thinking and communication.

## Quest 2 Student Learning Outcomes

**Content:** Identify, describe, and explain the cross-disciplinary dimensions of a pressing societal issue or challenge as represented by the social sciences and/or biophysical sciences incorporated into the course.

**Critical Thinking:** Critically analyze quantitative or qualitative data appropriate for informing an approach, policy, or praxis that addresses some dimension of an important societal issue or challenge.

**Communication:** Develop and present, in terms accessible to an educated public, clear and effective responses to proposed approaches, policies, or practices that address important societal issues or challenges.

**Connection:** Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.

### Quest 3 at a Glance

- Provides students with specific real-world activities that facilitate their personal and professional development
- Prepares students to engage in an ever-changing world
- Piloted in 2022-2023, implementation to begin in 2024

## Quest 3 Experience

For Quest 3, students enroll in a variable credit course (0-3 credits) for a semester-long immersive experience that takes place outside of the traditional classroom: community service and outreach, internships, independent research, design competitions, and/or study abroad. Where the Quest 1 and Quest 2 experiences are embedded within the general education curriculum, prepare students for the rigor of college, and add meaning and purpose to their undergraduate education, Quest 3 is embedded within the major and provides students with the skills and opportunities needed for meaningful engagement with the world and labor force, career readiness, and post-graduate success.

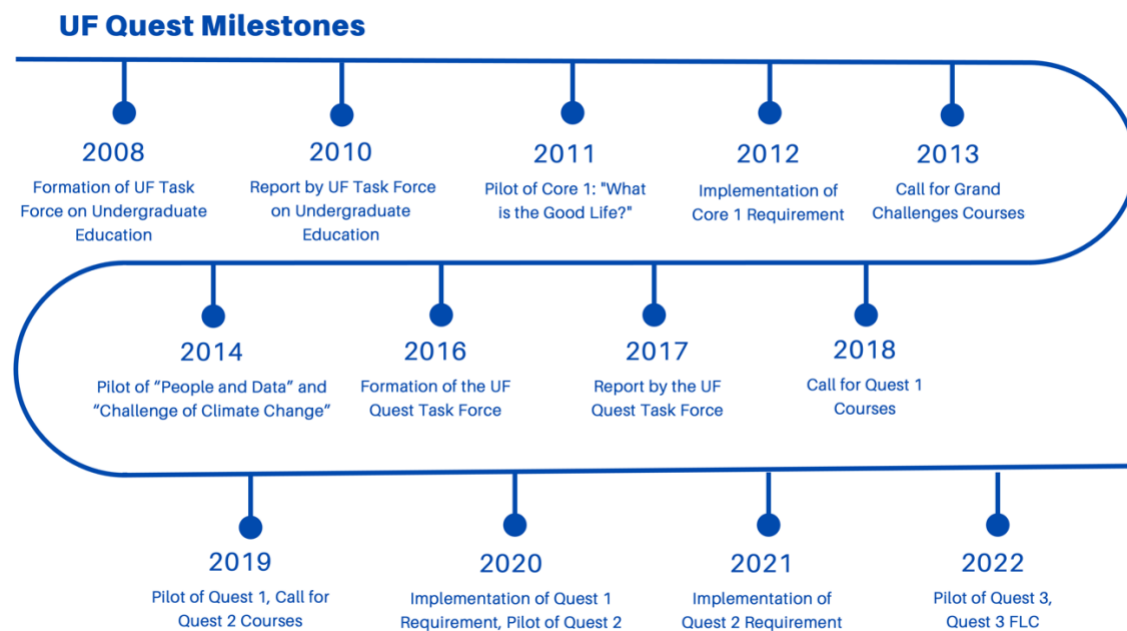
## Quest 4 Experience

Quest 4 is an optional component of the program that is intended to provide a synthesis of the UF Quest experiences within the student's discipline through the senior capstone to better prepare them for a wider range of career possibilities and better ready them for careers that do not yet exist.

## History of UF Quest

### Introduction

Since 2008, the faculty of the University of Florida has participated in a campus-wide effort to reinvigorate the teaching of general education courses. The UF Quest program is the result of this extensive review of the undergraduate curriculum based on multiple assessments of student learning outcomes in general education courses; student evaluations of their undergraduate experiences through surveys and focus groups; and reports from faculty committees, working groups, and task forces representing multiple colleges, departments, schools, and centers.



### The UF Task Force on Undergraduate Education

On October 3, 2008, the University of Florida Task Force on Undergraduate Education was convened and charged with completing a comprehensive review of the entire undergraduate experience and recommending changes that were ambitious and achievable. It began by examining current practices at the University of Florida and best practices in the following areas:

- General education
- Signature experiences/capstone experiences
- Faculty teaching skills and advising
- Honors Program
- International experience/global competency
- Internships, service learning, civic engagement
- Lifelong learning
- Residential experiences
- Undergraduate research/creative work

In January 2010, the Task Force on Undergraduate Education submitted its final report. It concluded that general education in its current form was “too fragmented” and did not have a “systematic relationship to purpose” because it was “driven by college major programs,” “diluted by transfer and examination credit,” and lacked “faculty ownership.” The task force recommended that the university reexamine the purpose of the general education curriculum (see pages 16–44).

### The UF Core Program

Subsequently, the General Education Task Force — Humanities was conveyed and recommended the creation of an interdisciplinary core course in the humanities (“What is the Good Life”). The goal was to create a signature experience for UF students, provide coherence to the general education curriculum, promote collaboration among academic units, and drawn on the considerable resources at the university to support the teaching of the humanities (see pages 45–48). Jointly developed by the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of the Arts, and the College of Design, Construction and Planning, “What is the Good Life” included readings common to all sections, such as Sophocles’ *Antigone*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, Thoreau’s *Walden*, Hesse’s *Siddhartha*, and Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*. The individual faculty supplemented the common readings with works from their own disciplines for the sections of the course that they taught. In addition, the students participated in common activities that took them outside of the classroom, such as performances at the Phillips Center and guided tours of the Harn Museum of Art. This allowed the sections to have both common and unique elements. The course focused on close reading, analysis, argumentation, written and oral communication, and critical thinking needed for lifelong learning.

Beginning in 2012, undergraduates entering the University of Florida were required to take “What is the Good Life?” to fulfill the UF Core 1 requirement and complete three credits of the general education requirement in the humanities. This was intended to be the first step in the development of the UF Core program. In Fall 2013, faculty were invited to submit proposals for general education courses in the natural and social sciences for the “Grand Challenges Core” (see pages 49–56). Two proposals were piloted the following academic year: “The Challenge of Climate Change” and “An Informed Life: People and Data.” These courses were not fully implemented because faculty and students expressed dissatisfaction with the core model. The unevenness of the instruction, lack of student choice, reliance on graduate teaching assistants, and the use of adjunct faculty and overload teaching assignments caused the greatest concern.

### The UF Quest Program

In 2015 and 2016, the provost’s office engaged faculty in a conversation about the UF Core program (see pages 57–82), from which a new sequential model emerged. In Spring 2017, faculty task forces, representing departments that teach undergraduate courses as well as the professional schools, called for the development of a new general education curriculum that would address the limitations of the UF Core model and its precursors while keeping the successful aspects of “What is the Good Life” (see pages 83–123). This led to the pilot of Quest 1 in 2019, Quest 2 in 2020, and Quest 3 in 2023 followed by the implementation of the Quest 1 requirement in 2020 and the Quest 2 requirement in 2021. The implementation of Quest 3 will begin in 2024 and is expected to be completed in 2027 in a structured roll-out as individual departments and schools add Quest 3 experiential learning requirement to their majors.

In contrast to the UF Core model, Quest courses are taught in-load, with many classes capped at 35 students, making faculty expertise, student choice, and faculty engagement the cornerstone of the program.

While the typical lower-division course regularly serves as an introduction to or a survey of a discipline and may sometimes also satisfy general education requirements, Quest courses, by contrast, are thematic. They are developed specifically for the UF Quest program, not the individual majors. This makes Quest less susceptible to fragmentation of curriculum and dilution of purpose, which the general education program encountered before the development of the UF Core model. Also, in contrast to most lower-division courses, Quest courses focus on qualitative and quantitative reasoning, not memorization of content that students must master before taking upper-level courses in the majors. Quest courses do not tell the students what to think. Instead, they teach students how to think. Quest courses are interdisciplinary because the questions asked in Quest courses invariably spill beyond the traditional disciplinary walls. Quest both connects to and goes beyond the individual majors so that students can acquire the necessary skills and tools for a rapidly challenging world and can develop the mindset that is needed for lifelong learning.

The faculty task forces that developed the UF Quest program recognized the need for students to relate their Quest courses to the majors and professions that they are pursuing. Otherwise, Quest would become just another requirement that students needed to satisfy before they graduate. A new “connection” student learning outcome (SLO) was, therefore, created specifically for Quest courses (see pages 5–6). The connection SLO requires faculty to connect course content to their students’ personal, intellectual, and professional development. UF Quest objectives and learning outcomes—not the content of the individual Quest courses—create a common learning experience for UF students and make UF Quest a cohesive program.

To help UF Quest achieve this goal, the Office of Assessment was charged with assessing student achievement of Quest SLOs. In Fall 2019, the UF Quest Assessment Task Force with members from across the university was convened. With representatives from 16 different colleges and divisions, the task force spent the 2019-2020 academic year developing a comprehensive plan for this assessment, which was piloted before it was then implemented (see pages 124–47).

#### Key Features of UF Quest

- Consists of thematic interdisciplinary courses, not introductions to or surveys of specific fields
- Is driven by faculty expertise and student choice
- Emphasizes faculty-student engagement and incorporates student reflection
- Teaches students how to think, not what to believe
- Prioritizes active and experiential learning

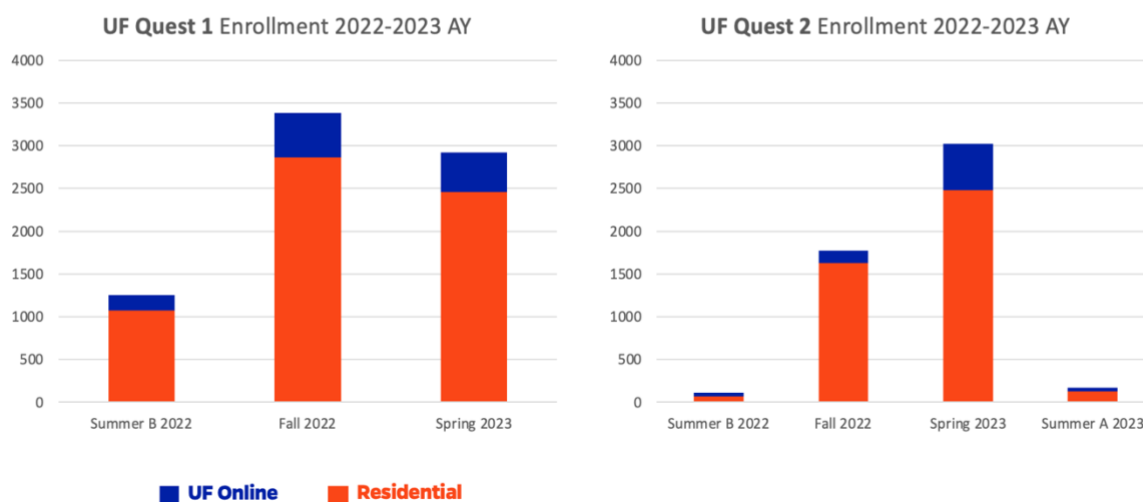
Students begin the UF Quest program by taking a Quest 1 course that explores an essential question in the humanities and then a Quest 2 course that examines a pressing question in either the biophysical or social and behavioral sciences. All Quest 1 and Quest 2 courses are required to have assignments that promote active and experiential learning, so students develop critical reasoning skills needed for their majors, careers, and professions and to prepare them for their next Quest experience. In Quest 3, students complete a semester-long immersive experience that takes place out of the traditional classroom, such as community service and outreach, internships, independent research, design competitions, and/or study abroad. For Quest 4, departments have the option to synthesize the Quest experience within the discipline through the senior capstone.

## Implementation of the UF Quest Program

### Introduction

The implementation of the UF Quest program is challenging because of its scale and sequential structure. Unlike the UF Core, which had only three courses (i.e., “What is the Good Life,” “The Challenge of Climate Change,” and “An Informed Life: People and Data”), more than 200 Quest 1 and Quest 2 courses have already been developed, taught by faculty from 60 departments and schools, 7 colleges, and 2 centers.

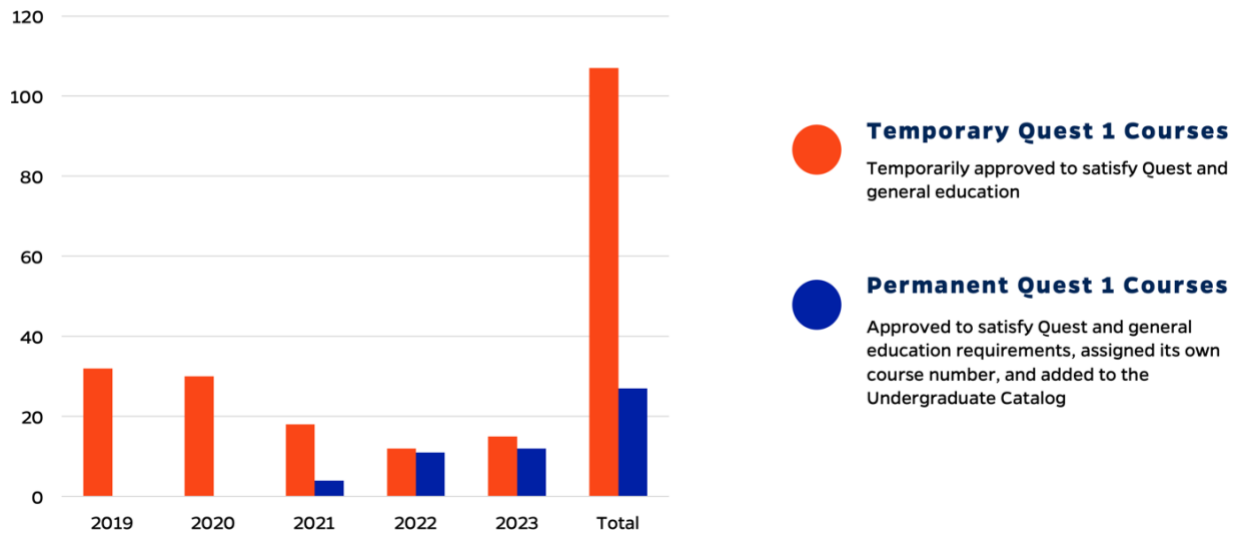
### Enrollments for 2022-23 Academic Year (Total: 12,737)



Because of the sequential structure of Quest, existing Quest 1 and Quest 2 courses will need to be modified as the UF Quest program evolves to meet the changing needs of UF undergraduates. New Quest 1 and Quest 2 courses will need to be developed to reflect the directions of new scholarship, new fields, and new majors and to prepare students for new career paths. Although many undergraduate programs already provide and require their students to complete experiences that are comparable to Quest 3, some of these experiences may need to be modified to meet Quest 3 learning outcomes. Additional options will need to be developed so that all undergraduates in the residential and online programs will have the opportunity to participate in a semester-long immersive experience.

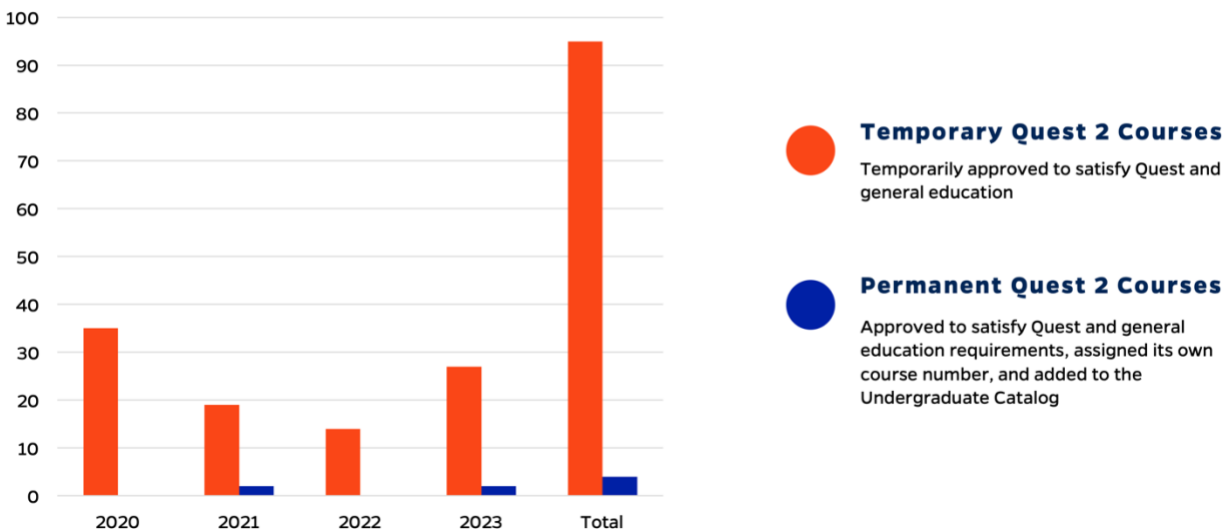
The Quest 1 and Quest 2 designations are not added to pre-existing courses. Instead, faculty are required first to pilot a proposed Quest 1 or Quest 2 course temporarily as IDS 2935, which is a “rotating topics” course, housed in Interdisciplinary Studies. This stage is referred to as the “temporary approval process.” After the temporary Quest course has been successfully taught, the instructor may then submit a request for the course to receive its own course prefix and number. The second stage is referred to as the “permanent approval process.” The two-step process is intended to expedite the development of new Quest courses and provide faculty the opportunity to adjust the design of their course based on classroom experience before they request permanent status for their course. At both stages, curriculum committees review the course for its alignment with Quest and general education objectives and learning outcomes. In some instances, faculty base their temporary Quest course on a pre-existing course, which is sunsetted after

## Development of UF Quest 1 Courses



the permanent version has been approved. Often, the department course will remain in the curriculum because it differs significantly and serves a different purpose from the Quest course. However, it is more common for faculty to design Quest courses from scratch. Because Quest courses are interdisciplinary and their objectives differ from department courses, department courses cannot be easily modified for the UF Quest program. In addition, faculty have expressed a greater interest in designing original courses for Quest rather than retooling pre-existing courses because the former method allows for greater innovation and creativity and provides them with more opportunities to connect course content to their research interests.

## Development of UF Quest 2 Courses

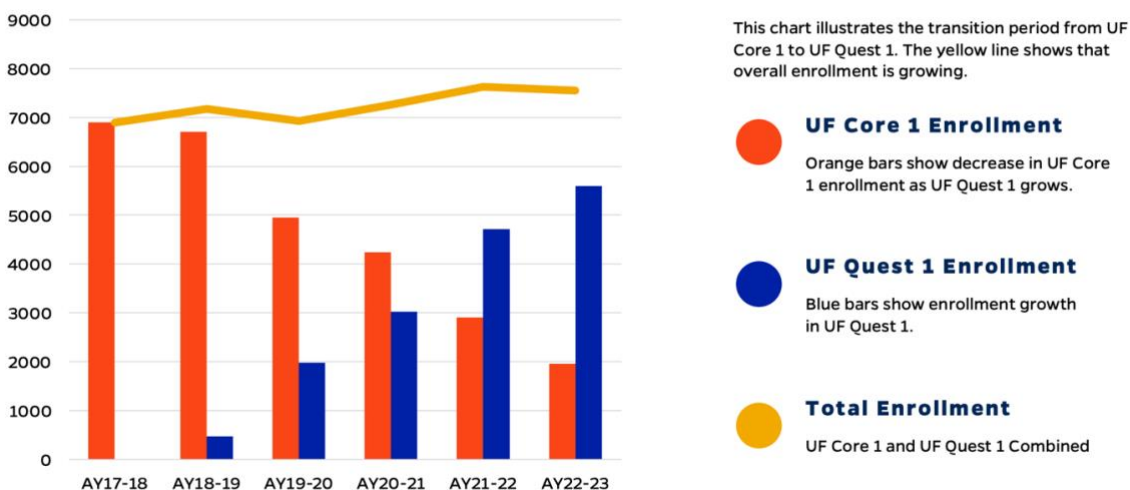


Syllabus workshops are regularly offered each semester so that faculty have the opportunity to learn about the UF Quest program and the course approval process and to ask questions about [Quest 1](#) and [Quest 2](#) Syllabus Policies. In addition, the Quest 1 and Quest 2 directors meet with faculty to provide comments, feedback, and suggestions on their course proposals in advance of the review by the General Education Committee. The [Quest Syllabus Builder](#) and [Quest Syllabus Template](#) are also available for faculty to consult. These resources include succinct instructions on how to design a Quest syllabus, provide detailed explanations of the required components of the Quest syllabus, and offer examples of best practices for course design. Because faculty have found it challenging to develop experiential learning assignments for their Quest courses, UF Quest partnered with the Center for Teaching Excellence to add a section on experiential-learning to [UF's Instructor Guide to Teaching](#). Finally, to maintain consistent standards throughout the review process and as membership of the various curriculum committees change, Quest readers are required to have a thorough understanding and knowledge of the Quest Syllabus Builder and Quest Syllabus Template, and they must use the [Quest Review Checklist](#) to assess the alignment of course proposals to Quest and general education objectives and outcomes. These resources have been developed incrementally in response to feedback from faculty who piloted Quest courses in the early stages of the program.

#### Quest Resources for Faculty

- Faculty Resource Site
- Syllabus Builder & Template
- Review Checklist
- Instructor Guide

### Transition from the UF Core I to the UF Quest I Requirement

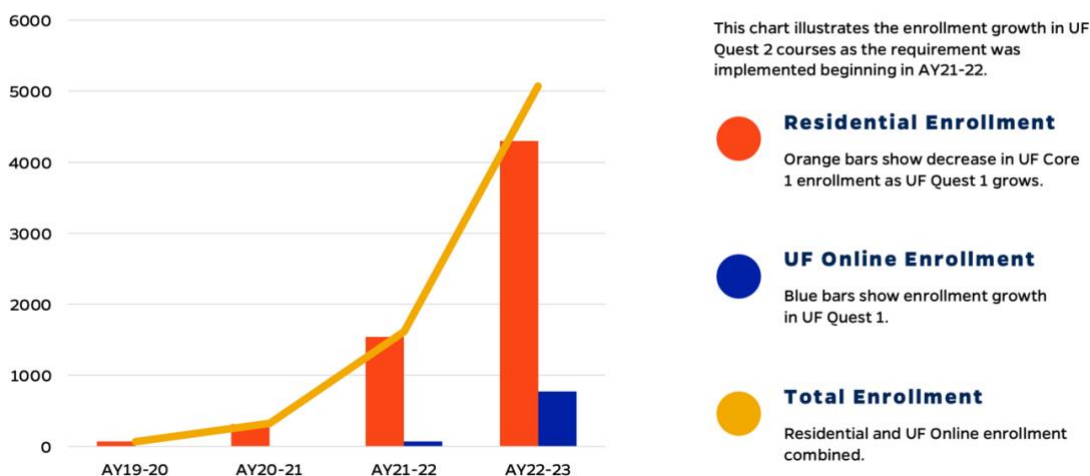


#### Quest 1

The UF Quest 1 requirement was implemented first for obvious reasons. It is the first experience that students are required to complete in the new UF Quest program. In addition, the UF Quest 1 requirement replaced the UF Core 1 requirement, which was already in effect, so Quest 1 was easier to implement than

Quest 2 or Quest 3. During the pilot stage of Quest 1 (January 1, 2019 to May 15, 2020), students were permitted to substitute a piloted Quest 1 course for “What is the Good Life.” Effective Summer B 2020, incoming students were required to fulfill the UF Quest 1 requirement. “What is the Good Life,” continued to be offered but as a Quest 1 option. For the 2023-2024 academic year, “What is the Good Life” will only be offered to UF Online students, but it is anticipated that enough online options of Quest 1 courses will be available the following academic year so that What is the Good Life will be completely phased out by May 15, 2024.

## Implementation of the UF Quest 2 Requirement



### Quest 2

Quest 2 was more difficult to implement because it was a new requirement, and most of the colleges tasked with the development of Quest 2 courses did not participate in the development of the UF Core program. In addition, Quest 2 was piloted at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, best practices piloted for Quest 1 expedited the development of Quest 2 courses. During the Quest 2 pilot stage, enrollment in Quest 2 courses was significantly lower than Quest 1 enrollment because the Quest 2 requirement had not yet gone into effect, and students were not permitted to substitute a Quest 2 course for “What is the Good Life.” By Spring 2023, enrollments in Quest 2 courses matched those in Quest 1 courses (see page 10). For the 2023-2024 academic year, Quest 2 will have the same enrollment capacity as Quest 1.

### Quest 3

Unlike Quest 1 and Quest 2, which are part of the general education requirement, Quest 3 is a requirement added to the individual majors. It will be implemented in a structured roll-out as the individual departments adjust their majors to include the Quest 3 experience. The Heavener School of Business piloted Quest 3 in the 2022-2023 academic year and is expected to add the Quest 3 requirement to its majors by the 2024-2025 catalog year. In 2022-2023, the UF Quest 3 Faculty Learning Community was convened to develop best practices for the Quest 3 experience (see pages 148–89). The Quest 3 roll-out is in progress with the majority of departments adding the requirement within the next three academic years and the remainder no later than 2027.

## Future Plans

- Full Quest 3 roll-out (2027)
- Quest 4 integration
- Development of the Horizon experiences
- Synthesis of the Quest sequence
- Development of the peer mentor and student ambassador programs

## Conclusion

In the twentieth century, general education was, for the most part, a survey of the humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and the biological and physical sciences. Taught primarily at the lower-division level, general education courses introduced students to the individual disciplines. General education focused primarily on content and the rote memorization of facts and theories of the various fields so that students had a general competency in the established areas of knowledge.

General education is still needed for students of the twenty-first century. However, it must focus instead on critical thinking and communication, teach students how to apply methods and theories from different fields and draw connections from disparate areas of study, and prepare students, so they can adapt to an ever-changing world and have the capacity to engage in lifelong learning.

In the past fifteen years, faculty task forces, working groups, and committees have convened to examine the strengths and weaknesses of UF's general education curriculum. During the process, faculty have dared to experiment and to be innovative and creative. UF Quest is the product of this careful and methodical persistence in the reimagination of the general education curriculum.

UF Quest invites students to explore pressing and essential questions, prioritizes active and experiential learning, offers interdisciplinary courses, and provides students with real-world experiences and research opportunities, so they have the skills needed for the academic rigor of college, are better prepared for a wider range of career possibilities, and are ready for careers that do not yet exist.

## Appendices

### Participating Colleges, Centers, Departments, and Schools

#### College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Agricultural Education and Communication

Department of Agronomy

Department of Animal Sciences

Department of Entomology & Nematology

Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences

Department of Food & Resource Economics

Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition

School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences

One Health Center

Department of Horticultural Sciences

Department of Microbiology and Cell Science

Department of Plant Pathology

Department of Soil & Water Sciences

Department of Wildlife Ecology

#### College of the Arts

School of Art & Art History

Center of Arts in Medicine

Institute of Digital Worlds

School of Music

School of Theater & Dance

#### College of Design, Construction and Planning

School of Architecture

Rinker School of Construction Management

Department of Landscape Architecture

Department of Urban & Regional Planning

#### College of Education

School of Human Development and Organizational Studies

School of Teaching & Learning

#### The Florida Museum of Natural History

#### George A. Smathers Libraries

#### The Hamilton Center

#### The Harn Museum of Art

#### College of Health and Human Performance

Department of Applied Physiology and Kinesiology

Department of Health Education & Behavior

Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management

#### College of Journalism and Communication

Department of Advertising

Department of Journalism

#### Center for Latin American Studies

#### College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of African American Studies

Center for African Studies

Department of Anthropology

Department of Astronomy

Department of Biology

Department of Chemistry

Department of Classics

Department of Economics

Department of English

English Language Institute

Center of European Studies

Center for Gender, Sexualities, & Women's Studies Research

Department of Geography

Department of Geological Sciences

Bob Graham Center for Public Service

Department of History

Center of Jewish Studies

Department of Linguistics

Department of Literatures, Languages & Cultures

Department of Mathematics

Department of Philosophy

Department of Physics

Department of Political Science

Department of Psychology

Department of Religion

Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law

Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies

Department of Statistics

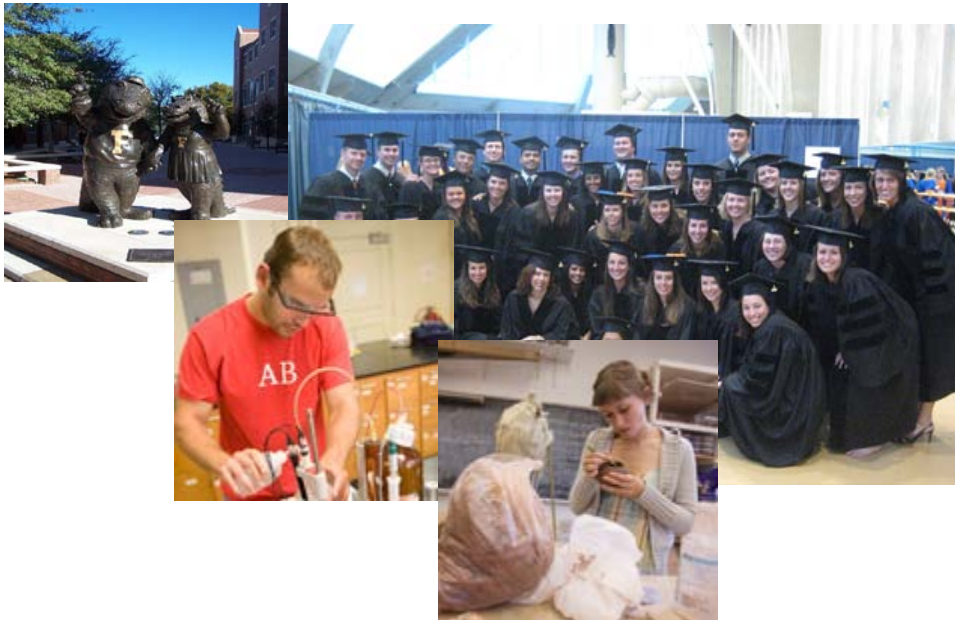
University Writing Program

Dial Center for Written & Oral Communication

# University of Florida

## Task Force on Undergraduate Education

January 2010



**UF** | UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**  
*The Foundation for The Gator Nation*

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## **Members of the Task Force**

Edward Schaefer	Dean's Office, College of Fine Arts, Co-chair
Jill Varnes	Health Education and Behavior, College of Health and Human Performance, Co-chair
Bonnie Bernau	Educational Programs, Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art
David Bloomquist	Civil and Coastal Engineering, College of Engineering
Marian Borg	Sociology, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Keith Carodine	University Athletic Association
Mary Kay Carodine	Student Affairs
Barbara Curbow	Behavioral Science and Community Health, College of Public Health and Health Professions
Sheila Dickison	Dean's Office, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Bruce Edwards	Mathematics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Catherine Emihovich	Dean's Office, College of Education
Wayne Griffin	Counseling Center, Division of Student Affairs
Martin Gundersen	Architecture, College of Design, Construction and Planning
Stephanie Hanson	Dean's Office, College of Public Health and Health Professions
Selman Hershfield	Physics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Susanne Hill	International Center
David Julian	Zoology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Albert Matheny	Academic Advising Center, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Andy McCollough	Dean's Office, Warrington College of Business Administration
Erica McCray	Special Education, College of Education
William McKeen	Journalism, College of Journalism and Communications
Michael McKenzie	Pharmacy Practice, College of Pharmacy
Toshi Nishida	Electrical and Computer Engineering, College of Engineering
Maureen Novak	Pediatrics, College of Medicine
Michael Olexa	Food and Resource Economics, IFAS
Diane Porter-Roberts	Housing for Academic Initiatives
Brian Ray	School of Business, Warrington College of Business Administration
Mark Rush	Economics, Warrington College of Business Administration
Judith Russell	University Libraries
Elaine Turner	Office of the Dean, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Daniel A. Wubah	Undergraduate Affairs, Provost's Office (Liaison)

The task force would like to add a note of appreciation to Kim Pace and Arlene Tabag (Provost's Office), Ashley Ramon (graduate student HHP), and Bernard Mair (who succeeded Daniel Wubah in the Office of Undergraduate Affairs) for their assistance in the completion of this report.

## **Executive Summary**

We believe this report represents a credible review of the major assets and challenges of the current undergraduate programs at the University of Florida (UF), in addition to a number of recommendations that will improve these programs.

The first draft of the report was developed in the Fall semester of 2008. The draft was then vetted by various groups and individuals, representing diverse units on campus. In particular, during the Fall semester of 2009, the task force engaged the entire campus in open meetings to obtain their views on the report. This campus-wide vetting confirmed the major portions of the report and resulted in some modifications which are included in this final version. Despite this intensive initial process, we view the report as an evolving document that should be reviewed at least biannually in order to assure that its findings and recommendations remain current and viable in a rapidly changing environment.

All of the recommendations of the task force are listed in the Summary of Findings section beginning on page 10. These findings are presented in the context of the sub-committee reports from which the recommendations were generated. All of these recommendations should be vetted by the Provost, perhaps revised and/or expanded, and then carefully considered for implementation. The complete reports of each subgroup can be found on the Provost web site at [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search\\_committees/UndergradCurriculum/](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search_committees/UndergradCurriculum/).

We believe that the following recommendations, synthesized from the larger list, are a good starting point. They are achievable, and implementing them will bring significant results. They are offered with sensitivity to current budgetary restrictions, but some improvements will require resources.

### **Overall Implementation**

- Adopt the vision, mission and values for UF's undergraduate experience proposed by the task force.
- Develop specific tools to recognize and support the undergraduate teaching mission of the University of Florida.
- Increase opportunities for interdisciplinary focus via experiential learning, research, and degree programs.

### **Signature Experiences**

- Work towards the creation of a UF signature experience, initiate a pilot program with the 2010-11 incoming freshman class using the themed approach and begin the development of the electronic portfolio. Also identify junior or senior level students to act as mentors to this class.
- Increase the role of First-Year Florida in the creation of a signature UF experience, including the linking of First-Year Florida classes to residential experiences in some sections.

### **General Education**

- Reexamine the purpose of the general education curriculum, articulate this purpose in all processes related to the general education curriculum, reconsider ways in which the curriculum is fulfilled, and expand the charge of the General Education Committee to include all aspects of the general education curriculum.

### **Honors**

- Develop the Honors Program into a four-year program, implementing the other recommendations regarding this program as a part of this expansion.

### **Enhancement of Teaching Skills and Advising / Faculty-Student Interaction**

- Reinstitute the University Center for Excellence in Teaching (UCET) or some similar center for teaching effectiveness, with a charge to implement the recommendations regarding the enhancement of teaching.
- Address recommendations regarding advising, as a critical companion to effective teaching/learning, in the reinstituted center for teaching excellence.
- Coordinate efforts between the UCET, the Office of Student Affairs, and the General Education Committee to implement the recommendations regarding the enhancement of faculty-student interaction.

### **Global and International Education**

- Consider an international certificate program.
- Develop specific suggestions of different ways for students to internationalize their studies, including alternate tracks.

### **Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity**

- Charge a specific office/group, under the direction of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs with the task of assisting in the development of, promotion of, oversight of, and accountability for, interdisciplinary, creative and research oriented studies.

### **Leadership Development/Co-curricular Activities**

- Create a co-curricular transcript for students. This may be part of the eportfolio (as detailed on page 12) or something separate.
- Utilize the themed education model (1st bullet signature experiences) to develop specific leadership opportunities for juniors and seniors.

### **Resource reallocation**

- Reallocate resources in the present budget planning cycle to give adequate support to the implementation of the recommendations concerning the general education curriculum and to the reinstitution of the UCET.

### **Service Learning and Civic Engagement**

- Incorporate service learning and civic engagement goals into the theme-based curriculum and e-portfolio initiatives in clear, accountable ways.

### **Recommended Timeline**

The task force would like to propose a plan of action once this final report is received by the provost. In February of 2009 the Provost should prepare a response to this document which should include the recommendations (revised if necessary) that he has accepted, and a method for continual assessment to determine the effectiveness of the implemented changes and the state of the undergraduate programs. The goal is to be able to present this report, together with the Provost's response, to the Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees in March - April of 2010.

During the 2010-11 academic year an implementation committee should be formed and charged with developing an implementation plan with August of 2011 as the date for beginning the implementation.

## **The University of Florida Undergraduate Experience**

### **Introduction**

Our faculty and students at the University of Florida are the ones responsible for shaping the undergraduate experience. This experience takes place within the context of a much larger university environment supported by a cadre of professional staff engaged in rounding out the total curricular and co-curricular experiences that we believe is uniquely UF. To clearly define what that experience is may be our ultimate challenge. As noted by one member of the task force, “Our students are first Gators, then they become a business or nursing or whatever student.”

The initial vision set forth in the charge to the task force to “being ranked among the best in a public AAU university,” was viewed by the task force as rather limiting. With this in mind, the task force proposes the following vision and mission for undergraduate education at the University of Florida including a set of core values that we believe will facilitate defining what a UF undergraduate experience is.

### **Vision for Undergraduate Education**

University of Florida graduates will have a well-developed capacity for intellectual inquiry, demonstrated competency in a chosen discipline, and a strong sense of personal, social, and global responsibility.

### **Mission of Undergraduate Education at the University of Florida**

The mission of undergraduate education at the University of Florida is to support teaching, research and service by developing in our students intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, creative potential, cultural sensitivity and sense of purpose. The University of Florida is committed to providing instruction of the highest quality, opportunities for research and innovation, and co-curricular programs that build students’ capacity for understanding themselves and the world, while fostering their commitment to the service of others locally, nationally and internationally.

### **UF's Core Values**

In the fulfillment of our mission we are guided by these core values:

#### **Creativity**

Using imaginative thinking to solve problems and expand knowledge.

#### **Diversity**

Embracing and respecting our differences, recognizing that these differences enrich us all.

#### **Engagement**

Extending our involvement in the community, the nation and the world.

**Intellectual curiosity**

Appreciating learning as a lifelong quest for knowledge.

**Leadership**

Developing the skills to succeed and inspiring others to succeed.

**Responsibility**

Recognizing each person's role, including our own, in ensuring a rewarding educational experience.

**The Charge of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education at UF**

The task force was charged by the provost to review the entire undergraduate experience at the University of Florida and to make recommendations toward achieving the vision for undergraduate education at UF. The recommendations were to be ambitious, but achievable.

Although we were encouraged to ignore the realities of the state's looming fiscal situation which could have far-reaching implications for any recommendations our task force might make, we found this somewhat difficult to do. What resulted was some creative thinking related to what might be feasible for more immediate implementation versus what would require additional resources and therefore would be suggested for a future point in time. For this reason, recommendations are presented in a phased approach for implementation with consideration of what might require additional resources, what might require resource reallocation and what may be considered cost-neutral.

**A Short History of the Process**

In June of 2008, the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs at the time, Daniel Wubah, gave a presentation to the University of Florida Board of Trustees (BOT) regarding the future of undergraduate education at the University of Florida

([http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search\\_committees/UndergradCurriculum/documents/BOT\\_presentation\\_June2008\\_Daniel\\_Wubah.ppt](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search_committees/UndergradCurriculum/documents/BOT_presentation_June2008_Daniel_Wubah.ppt)). In his presentation he offered a vision of the "UF undergraduate programs being ranked among the best among public AAU universities." To this end, the presentation challenged the BOT to consider not only the inherent strengths of the current undergraduate experience, but also some of the characteristics of a program that would be developed beyond the limits of even those strengths. The presentation also proposed an ambitious plan to review the entire undergraduate experience and propose recommendations for its enhancement – all within the coming academic year. The Board of Trustees accepted Dr. Wubah's proposal.

In August and September 2008, a task force of 28 members was assembled by the provost. The members of the task force were selected with the goal of having representation from as many parts of the UF undergraduate program as possible and of having a membership that would bring a blend of UF's institutional history and some new ideas.

On October 3, 2008 the task force held its first meeting during which Provost Joseph Glover gave the task force its charge to review the undergraduate experience at UF and to make recommendations that were ambitious but achievable.

The task force began its work immediately, dividing the task force into two subgroups and electing chairs of those subgroups before the first meeting was dismissed. These subgroups were to focus on current practices and best practices within several areas defined as important for the undergraduate experience. William (Andy) McCollough, Professor and Senior Associate Dean of the Warrington College of Business Administration, and David Julian, Assistant Professor of Zoology, were elected as chairs of the subgroups respectively.

As a means of giving some structure to the process, the subgroups were requested to study the undergraduate experience from the following perspectives:

- General Education
- Signature Experiences/Capstone Experiences
- Faculty-Student Interaction
- Faculty Teaching Skills and Advising
- Honors Program
- International Experiences/Global Competency
- Internships, Service Learning, Civic Engagement
- Lifelong Learning
- Residential Experiences
- Undergraduate Research/Creative Work
- Leadership

These subgroups did not preclude the discussion of other areas in the undergraduate experience. They were selected simply as a means to give some initial organization to the project. Subsequent conversation added leadership to the list.

On October 28, 2008 the task force held an all-day retreat, during which progress reports were given and discussed and the collective wisdom of the group was engaged to begin to establish some priorities with regard to areas of focus and possible recommendations.

After the retreat, subgroup members from current and best practices were asked to create an initial draft summarizing their areas of review including recommendations to strengthen or enhance the various areas of the undergraduate experience at UF. Those reports are summarized in this document. The full reports can be found on the Provost web site at [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search\\_committees/UndergradCurriculum/](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search_committees/UndergradCurriculum/).

The reports reveal that there are a number of areas of strength in the undergraduate experience here at UF. It is also evident, that these strengths may be in areas that are not actually available to all of our students. For example, all students do not have the opportunity for travel study programs or research with a faculty member and not all students complete their general education coursework at UF. In spite of these limitations, the task force believes that it is possible to structure a number of experiences that the majority of UF undergraduates will recognize as playing a critical role in their development as thoughtful, inquisitive, responsible people with high levels of integrity and respect for others.

During the remainder of the fall semester, another task force subgroup was formed to look for common threads that run through the reports that might be expressed in a clarified mission and vision for the undergraduate programs. The work of this subgroup resulted in the mission and vision statements in this report.

The early part of the spring 2009 semester was spent organizing the recommendations into a cohesive and concise report, with continued review by the task force, primarily through electronic means.

Although there are a number of excellent recommendations, the task force determined to first focus on those that could be accomplished with minimum new resources, although all would require a level of commitment to ensure implementation, the existing organizational structure would most likely be able to support implementation at some level.

In summer and fall of 2009, meetings were held with most of the deans of the university requesting that their colleges engage in some process that would vet the proposal and give the task force feedback. There were also several open meetings for feedback held in mid-September. The comments received through these efforts all listed in Appendix A, on page 30??. The comments were considered carefully. Some offered new insights to the effort and found their way into the recommendations. Most, however, echoed existing parts of the document, giving affirmation that the task force had addressed the major issues on the campus.

## **Summary of Findings**

This section will summarize the findings of the task force related to what is current practice on the University of Florida campus and what is considered best practices by other universities in the United States. We did not restrict the identification of best practices to the UF peer group as there are a number of outstanding academic institutions outside the peer group that are well known for their strong undergraduate programs.

### **Signature and/or Capstone Experiences**

The first step in assessing current practices was defining “signature experience.” One definition could be a common experience for all students that helps to define or distinguish a university. The closest UF has to a common experience for all students is the Common Reading Program <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/nsp/firstyearexperience/commonread>, which distributes one book to all incoming freshmen during their Preview (orientation) session. This program was initiated in 2007. Students are expected to read the selected book prior to arriving on campus. Resource materials are provided to faculty so that the topics and themes from the book may be incorporated into freshman courses. Additional events (such as a visit from the author) are scheduled throughout fall semester. As this program matures, it is expected that faculty throughout the colleges will become more engaged in discussions with students about the book.

Another definition of “signature experience” could be a capstone/defining/culminating experience that a student might describe as the highlight of their academic career. This experience would be different for each student and could include study abroad, research,

internships, service learning, and others. For purposes of this report, the information related to capstone/signature experiences has been combined in this section.

The status of capstone experiences/courses at the University of Florida is mixed: some colleges and departments have them, others do not. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicates that approximately half the seniors at UF have taken a “Culminating Senior Experience” before they graduate. One reason the number of capstone courses at UF has increased could be attributed to the requirement for Academic Learning Compacts including Student Learning Outcomes and Individual Student Assessments (Ref – UG catalog).

Beginning in the Fall of 2001, UF has encouraged students to pursue opportunities for Enhancing the Undergraduate Experience <http://www.admissions.ufl.edu/ugrad/experience.html>, and until 2008, this information was given to incoming freshmen at Preview in the Undergraduate Catalog/Guide to Majors. Some colleges have adapted this list and use it in recruitment and orientation materials. The task force initiated a graduating senior survey in an attempt to determine the extent to which students actually participate in the suggested 2 of 5 experiences and found that the majority of respondents (84%) participated in community volunteer service and over half (52%) participated in leadership opportunities on campus. Additionally 36% reported working with faculty on research.

To determine best practices, an e-mail inquiry was sent to the provost’s office of 18 AAU universities; responses were received from 12 (67%) at the time of writing this report. In addressing the question regarding signature experiences, most universities discussed these experiences in the context of the overall goals of the university for undergraduate education – similar to what UF has encouraged that is noted in the above paragraph.

Related to the capstone experience, none of the universities responding required a university-wide capstone; however, some universities are moving in that direction, either by requiring it of entire colleges (e.g., Rutgers) or encouraging it of all programs (e.g., University of Wisconsin; Texas A&M -moving towards making the capstone an option for all students in all degree programs). Only one university defined the nature of the capstone at the university level (Texas A & M specifies that a student must complete a course project, research experience or senior thesis) although these capstones were still typically administered at a departmental level. The nature of the capstone experience cited included: integrative courses or senior seminars, a research project and/or a senior thesis, an arts portfolio, and internships.

First year seminars were commonly offered but not required for all students. Most follow the format of UF’s First-Year Florida, designed as small groups (e.g., 20-25 students) of students. An interesting program offered at the University of Washington for freshmen only is an intensive month-long 5 credit class designed to meet the needs of incoming freshmen. According to the UW Web site the month-long class is designed to emphasize “interdisciplinary study, focused inquiry and writing” ([www.artsci.washington.edu/discovery/](http://www.artsci.washington.edu/discovery/)).

Half the programs polled specifically mentioned research as a signature experience; however, programs were quite varied, ranging from inquiry being part of a freshmen seminar (Rutgers) to upper division programs and research forums (e.g., Ohio State). One example is a summer

research program in biology at Arizona, which is open to engineering, computer science, math, and physics students (<http://ubrp.arizona.edu>); this program is supported by National Institutes of Health funding. A program at the University of Virginia combines research and service in a new public service program called Jefferson Public Citizens. (Press release: <http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=6619>).

Some universities, including UF via the University Scholars program, have financial support for research experiences, ranging from small amounts for project supplies (Texas A&M) to larger amounts to provide research support dollars for faculty (Rutgers, Ohio State) and combine efforts through both honors and undergraduate research offices.

General education was also used to create integrative learning or connections between theory and application as illustrated by University of North Carolina, that created an experiential and supplemental general education program for arts and sciences ([www.unc.edu/depts/uc/06description.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/uc/06description.html)).

Further consideration of the five experiences that UF encourages their undergraduates to have led to the concept of capturing for the student and the university the many and varied experiences from leadership to community service to research to international travel that our students have while completing their baccalaureate degrees. Creating a signature experience could be expressed in a themed approach for each year at UF such as the following:

- Freshman year: **Awareness** – First-Year Florida, common reading experience, residence hall.
- Sophomore year: **World view** – study abroad, foreign language, in-depth exploration of other cultures via coursework, or experiential learning.
- Junior year: **Service** – internships, community service, tutoring, alternative spring break.
- Senior year: **Leadership** – mentoring freshmen or other students in one of the areas above, more active role on campus and in the community.

The student would then be required to create an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) of their UF experience including a culminating reflection page in the e-portfolio of the UF experience and goals for the future. This e-portfolio would be an excellent way to capture the 4-year experience, and serve as reference material for scholarship, graduate or professional school applications or as a foundation for the student's résumé for job applications.

Within any one of these themes the student might have the opportunity to also engage in research or other creative work that could provide an umbrella for the four-year experience. For example, a senior student who has engaged in research with a faculty member could serve as a mentor for a freshman who may have an interest in working with the professor's research. Thus the first-year student's awareness year revolves around research as does the 4<sup>th</sup> year student's leadership/mentoring experience.

### Recommendations:

- Signature or capstone experiences should be part of a broader expression of student engagement and professional development and all university programs are encouraged to offer such an experience.
- An informational Web site for students capturing the values of the institution and/or goals for undergraduate education and the signature experiences aligning with these values/goals would provide an overarching context in which these experiences take place.
- Toward the creation of a UF signature experience, initiate a pilot program with the 2010-11 incoming freshman class using the themed approach and begin the development of the electronic portfolio.
- The college and/or program should define and manage capstone experiences.
- Multiple options at various levels of academic progression should be available to encourage participation and provide students with flexibility and choices matching their professional development interests and needs.
- UF should strive to assist students in connecting the meaning of being at a Doctoral/research extensive, land grant university from the beginning of a student's academic experience.
- Further exploration of other signature programs, such as the ones cited above, for possible adaptation at UF would be helpful to improving the UF program.
- In situations in which individual programs do not offer a capstone experience for all students, the university is encouraged to consider developing cross-disciplinary or theme-based capstone options.
- Funding and associated criteria for such funding to support signature experiences should be considered

### **General Education Curriculum**

The General Education Requirement of 36 semester hours at UF follows closely the state mandated distribution for courses with the additional requirement that students take coursework described as international and diversity. The international and diversity requirement is met with courses within the identified areas of composition (3 credits), humanities (9 credits), mathematics (6 credits), physical and biological sciences (9 credits) and social and behavioral sciences (9 credits) having either an N for international or D for diversity designation. The state mandated limit of 36 hours was a result of the legislative requirement that baccalaureate degrees conform to a 120 hours of credit for the degree. Even at the time this legislation was passed (~1996) it is evident that the university was cognizant of the need to produce more culturally competent graduates.

The General Education Committee is charged with establishing a philosophy for what constitutes the general education component for a baccalaureate degree. The committee has submitted that it does not currently accomplish its intent or provide a meaningful direction for the general education curriculum at UF. Despite the dedicated efforts of a number of faculty as members of the General Education Committee, progress towards purpose has been slow. In the last few years the development of Student Learning Outcomes, the requirement of a minimum C grade, the restructuring of the International and Diversity categories, and the annual review of a limited

number of courses has provided a motivational threshold. However, the most often used descriptors of the current status of the general education curriculum would include:

- 1) Fragmented; no systematic relationship to purpose;
- 2) driven by college major programs;
- 3) diluted by transfer and examination credit; and
- 4) service course syndrome with limited faculty ownership.

Although there are commonly held views about the purpose of the general education curriculum, it does not seem that these values are fully or adequately articulated or incorporated into the working philosophies of the institution. It would seem that regardless of the specific recommendations or alterations to the curriculum of general education, the purpose of general education at UF needs to be more clearly articulated and more fully ingrained into all the processes and decisions regarding the general education curriculum.

Even though all students at UF complete general education requirements, not all students complete these requirements on the UF campus. A substantial number of incoming students (~40%) complete some or all of these requirements via dual enrollment, transfer courses from community colleges, Advance Placement, or International Baccalaureate programs. This reality, however, should not preclude the desire to create an effective and rewarding general educational experience for UF students completing the requirements via UF courses.

The best practices subcommittee took a look at several different universities general education programs as well as material from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education, & America's Promise (2008) <http://www.aacu.org/leap/index.cfm>. Although the report focused on the overall undergraduate education, there are within the context of this report learning outcomes that could be used to create a framework for the general education curriculum while continuing to meet the distribution mandated by the state of Florida (36 semester hours in general education courses in the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences). To accomplish these outcomes might require a somewhat different framework for evaluating courses requesting to be categorized as general education, but the current framework used by the General Education Council has many of these elements even though they may not be termed exactly the same.

In addition, it would be worthwhile to consider other models of general education. Brown University (2008) recently completed a review of its undergraduate education program which resulted in a commitment to retain their long standing approach to general education. In many ways, UF's somewhat open approach to general education is similar to that of Brown in that students have a large array of courses from which to choose and they have from admission to graduation to complete the general education requirements. Students at UF do not share a common set of courses, but a common distribution of courses. At Brown the students "share a responsibility for arranging their own core

programs. Such responsibility highlights a basic goal of liberal learning – creative and independent thought” (Brown report<sup>1</sup>, p. 3).

Other institutional approaches toward general education range from theme-based programs to more course specific programs. One program that uses a combination of specified courses and theme-based areas is that of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Its model would be a useful springboard for further discussion about the model for the delivery of the general education curriculum at UF.

At UF students are often tracked into specific general education courses due to tracking requirements for their major. These requirements along with the state distribution requirements suggest that UF students may not necessarily be “arranging their own core programs.” This is not to suggest that such an approach might not be feasible here. Another element of best practice with general education programs identified is the emphasis on the educational values expressed via the general education experience.

While not specifically a part of general education, students in the university’s AIM program work largely in the general education curriculum while under the mentorship of the program. Thus, it seems appropriate to mention it here. The University of Florida’s AIM Program serves as an admissions access point for academically at-risk first-year students, as defined by the state of Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6C-6.0002 (Undergraduate Admission of First-Time, Degree-Seeking Freshmen)<sup>2</sup>, which mandates that certain students who do not meet the “regular” admissions requirements of a particular SUS institution must participate in an individualized Educational Learning Plan (ELP). Since its inception in spring 1997, AIM’s foundation has been its enhanced academic curriculum in math and writing and its proactive advising strategy for participating students. AIM also was conceived as a coordinated effort of existing resources working together to provide a comprehensive transitional and retention program that begins shortly after AIM students are admitted to UF and continues throughout their first year. Thus, AIM has always relied on several university-wide offices to ensure that its students are provided with the academic development, advising support, pre-enrollment planning assistance, and enrichment activities necessary to succeed at the university. Over the course of the 10-year history of the program, roughly 3,500 new students have been provided access to UF through AIM, which historically has enjoyed a first-year retention rate only slightly below that of the general student body.

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<sup>1</sup> *The curriculum at forty: A plan for strengthening the college experience at Brown*, (2008). Brown University, Office of the Dean of the College, Providence, Rhode Island.

<sup>2</sup> BOG 6C-6.002 (6) (b) 3 reads: “Each university will provide an individual learning plan for each student enrolled who does not meet the standard admissions requirements listed in Board of Governors regulation. The board of trustees will review the success of students admitted under the profile assessment process to ensure that their rates of retention and graduation remain near or above the institution’s average.”

### Recommendations:

- Reexamine the purpose of the general education curriculum, with an eye toward considering that UF's general education curriculum may, indeed, have a purpose beyond that of the state legislature's view of the curriculum.
- The determined purpose should be clearly articulated and incorporated into all processes and decisions regarding the general education curriculum.
- Rethink the ways in which this curriculum might be fulfilled more creatively/comprehensively than in its current fragmented model.
- Enlarge the charge of the General Education Committee to specifically include all aspects of the general education curriculum. It is important that the oversight responsibility be faculty driven and if the existing General Education Committee is not the entity, then the alternative must have faculty ownership.
- In addition, these increased responsibilities must have resource support. The current budget (zero) cannot maintain an enlarged set of responsibilities.
- Retain the AIM program and study it for potential tools and services that might serve the larger UF student community.

## **The Honors Program**

A review of the current practice with the UF Honors Program indicates that the current program is restricted to students during their freshman and sophomore years. Students with the appropriate grade point average are encouraged to write an honors thesis through their home departments, but the honors program has little involvement in these activities other than being the repository for the completed work.

The staff in the honors office is small in number and there is no program-dedicated honors faculty. Faculty members in the various colleges are, in effect, on loan to teach in the honors program. In the opinion of the task force members reviewing this program, the classes offered through the honors program are often among the most exciting and creative courses at the university.

Honors students (in the first two years) are required to provide documentation of specified levels of participation in at least one of the opportunities for Enhancing the Undergraduate Experience (<http://www.honors.ufl.edu/aboutus.html#requirements>) in order to receive the honors program certificate of completion. The only upper division (junior and senior year) honors program at UF is in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS).

According to the CALS Web site, "CALS Honors course work **integrates** with required and elective courses....To graduate as a CALS Honors Scholar, students must complete each of the five experiences listed below and maintain an **upper division GPA** of at least a 3.75. All participants must complete these five experiences: ALS 4921 (Honors Colloquium - 3 Credits); ALS 4932 (Honors Orientation - 1 Credit); XXX 4909 (Honors Project 3 Credits); 2 - 3 credits of additional Honors course work - see the Honors courses web page for further details; Write a project report or Honors Thesis" (<http://www.cals.ufl.edu/honors/index.shtml>).

A review of honors programs at peer institutions (including Penn State, Ohio State, Minnesota, Texas at Austin, Georgia, Illinois, and Maryland) indicated that a four-year program was the norm. Group discussion and further examination of the best practices at peer institutions resulted in the recommendations that follow. The task force is aware that to expand the program to encompass four years will not only require greater coordination with the college in which the student's major is housed, but additional resources as well, thus making the recommendation for a development officer extremely important.

The University of Georgia raises \$2-3 million a year from honors alumni. UF's success in this area is much more modest. The UF Foundation raised the funds to establish the Lombardi Scholars program to fund honors students. Additionally, close to \$2 million has been directed to the UF Honors Program via the Wentworth Foundation and the Dunlevie Family. Annual contributions from parents of current students have continued to increase over the years. The youth of the program (initiated in 1989), the fact that students may not feel the strong affiliation to honors after only two years, and no dedicated development officer have interacted to hamper current fundraising efforts.

Many honors students enter the program with significant advanced placement hours and are in effect sophomores (or even juniors) when they arrive on campus. This presents an excellent opportunity to encourage the 4+1 degree programs. A number of students can take advantage of these 4+1 programs, but all honors students should be encouraged to complete both their baccalaureate and master's degrees in four years, acknowledging that some degree programs (many in the health sciences) do not lend themselves easily to this concept. This endeavor also allows the university to meet its goal of increasing graduate hours and distinguishing itself from other state institutions. Encouraging students to earn a graduate degree also may involve alerting parents to the fact that in four years their child could have not only an undergraduate degree but also a graduate degree. Involving parents in this effort is important because often the parents will need to contribute some amount of financial support when their child takes the graduate courses.

#### Recommendations:

- Expand Florida's honors program to a four-year program.
- Secure the services of a development officer for honors.
- More effectively use the honors program as a gateway to graduate study.
- Make better use of the faculty advisory board for the honors program. The board should examine honors course offerings to be certain that quality is maintained.

### **Undergraduate Research/Creative Work**

Undergraduate research can be found in the current undergraduate catalog within existing compacts and curricula in most colleges. These take the form of special or individual study coursework that requires faculty mentorship and supervision with a stated research objective. In addition there is the requirement for all honors graduates to complete some form of individual research and/or creative work as part of the requirement for graduation with an honors designation. These usually take the title; thesis, senior paper, senior project or portfolio of creative work supervised by individual colleges and submitted to the honors program. Many

certificates for graduation in the undergraduate area require individual research or creative work under the mentorship of faculty for the certification.

The University of Florida is also home to one of the premier university based art galleries in the country, the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art. The opportunity for faculty across campus to use the Harn Museum for encouraging and enhancing creative exploration in the form of research or cultural appreciation is extensive. In the Harn Museum's 5-year Strategic Plan (2009-2013) there are two goals which directly speak to opportunities created for and by UF undergraduates. One is to "weave the museum's programs into the academic fabric of the University of Florida" and the second is that we will "use the museum's diverse art collections and exhibitions to facilitate dialogue about global ideas and issues."

To this purpose, undergraduate experiences at the Harn Museum are uniquely rich and varied. In the past year, classes have been conducted at the museum by Harn staff and interdisciplinary UF faculty in such wide-ranging disciplines as English and historic preservation. For example, using a mixture of notable images and art on display, Dr. Rebecca Nagy, Harn Director and College of Education Dean Catherine Emihovich co-taught a Summer B course entitled, "Depictions of Children in Art: From Innocence to Hanna Montana."

In addition, College of Design, Construction and Planning Professor Roy Graham's course on historic preservation provided students the opportunity to connect the Harn exhibition, *Promises of Paradise: Staging Mid-Century Design* with their weekly class sessions, guest lectures and a national four-day symposium also held at the Harn. In another example, for their first assignment, English Department Professor Deborah Greger's poetry class utilized artworks on view in the Maggie Taylor exhibition, *Almost Alice: New Illustrations of Wonderland* for inspiration and then conducted a public reading of their creations as part of the Museum Nights program.

Daniel Pink, in his *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*,<sup>3</sup> makes a compelling case that we are entering a "conceptual age" in which leaders will be people who can help society take full advantage of the advances of the "information age." These will be people who can think conceptually, synthetically, innovatively, that is, creative people. Ken Robinson echoes Pink's ideas:

The world economies are caught up in a genuine paradigm change. The new technologies do not mean simply that we have new ways of doing things we did before: businesses, organizations and individuals everywhere are faced with entirely new forms of work, leisure and ways of being.... There are profound consequences for the development of creative abilities and for the whole idea of human resources, educations, training and economic competitiveness.<sup>4</sup>

Mitchell Resnick, the Director of MIT's Media Laboratory, affirms both Pink and Robinson: The shift in focus [during the 1990's] from "information" to "knowledge" is an improvement. But I prefer a different conception: the "Creative Society." As I see it, success in the future will be based not on how much we know, but on our ability to think and act creatively. The proliferation of digital technologies has accentuated the need for

<sup>3</sup> Pink, Daniel. *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson, Ken. *Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Capstone Publishing, 2001, 92.

creative thinking in all aspects of our lives, and has also provided tools that can help us improve and reinvent ourselves. Throughout the world, computing and communications technologies are sparking a new entrepreneurial spirit, the creation of innovative products and services and increased productivity. The importance of well educated creative citizens is greater than ever before.<sup>5</sup>

We believe that the future leadership in higher education will belong to those institutions who understand the new needs, demands, challenges and opportunities of Robinson's "conceptual age" and Resnick's "creative society" and are best able to implement the cultivation and sustainability of the human resource of creativity on their campuses.

The College of Fine Arts is a natural venue for creative work on campus. However, it should not be the only venue for such work. The activities of the Harn Museum and the College of Design, Construction and Planning mentioned above are just two examples of creativity in other areas of the campus. The fine arts can provide a model for creativity and also provide leadership in the university's quest for infusing creativity into the whole campus culture. At the same time, the university's commitment to the development of creative potential in students should be more broadly based than work in the fine arts only. There should be a creativity requirement for all students in the general education requirements.

Research (and, by the above examples, creative work) is one of the five activities UF recommends for students to enhance their undergraduate experience (<http://www.admissions.ufl.edu/ugrad/experience.html>). UF currently provides a variety of activities that encourage and support undergraduate research including: University Scholars Program (<http://www.scholars.ufl.edu/>), Journal of Undergraduate Research (<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/jur/>), senior thesis, interdisciplinary studies major (in CLAS), Science for Life Program (<http://hhmi.chem.ufl.edu/metadot/index.pl>), credit for undergraduate research in some departments and through the honors program, the Undergraduate Research Database (<http://www.honors.ufl.edu/researchdatabase.html>).

Best practices around the country indicate that to go to the next step an office of undergraduate research that provides an organized approach to research across a large university is needed. Among the many successful programs identified, the University of North Carolina provides a superlative example of what such an office can do to provide visibility and support to the research enterprise for students.

With a staff of four, the UNC Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/>) "provides the information and resources to engage in original inquiry, scholarship and creative work while you are an undergraduate at Carolina." The office lays out for students what to do starting as an incoming student, freshman, and sophomore and so on. Highlights of this program include a First-Year Seminar that offers a research experience; a sophomore "Reorientation Workshop" sponsored by Student Government; a course, IDST 195 (Modes of Inquiry), to learn about faculty research in many disciplines; course or courses that

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Resnick, *Rethinking Learning in the Digital Age*. In *The Global Information Technology Report: Readiness for the Networked World*, edited by G. Kirkman. Oxford University Press. (2002) Accessed at <http://web.media.mit.edu/~mres/papers.html> on 15 February 2008.

teach research methodologies. The website itself is very helpful with various kinds of information and advice (Top Ten Questions about Undergraduate Research, for example). OUR also provides skill-building workshops on such issues as research proposal writing, poster design, and navigating the IRB process.

The Carolina Research Scholars Program (CRSP) provides a specific means for students to have an in-depth research experience in a systematic way. Students who complete the program receive a designation on their transcript: "Carolina Research Scholar." All students are eligible to earn the CRSP designation. The criteria for completion of the program are: completion of the IDST195 Modes of Inquiry Course and completion of at least two research intensive courses (6 credit hours). OUR maintains an online list of these courses in each department. There are also lists of courses where a student is "coached" by a graduate student as they initiate a project. Research intensive courses are those in which over half the class time is devoted to students conducting original research and presenting research conclusions. Finally, a student must present their results at the Annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research.

#### Recommendation

- Establish a creativity component in the general education requirement.
- Move towards a centralized Office of Undergraduate Research that provides help to students in navigating the research process and provides information on existing programs. An important first step would be to start in a modest way with the long-term goal of having as vibrant a program as UNC's, which is an excellent model.

### **Enhancement of Faculty Teaching Skills and Advising**

In early 1995, the University Center for Excellence in Teaching (UCET) was created at UF. It was a welcomed resource for those faculty and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) seeking to enhance teaching skills. Some of the services UCET provided included the Faculty Fellow Program (FFP), Mid-Term Teaching and Learning Feedback Program, as well as tailored workshops to focus attention on pedagogically effective and efficient practices for both campus and online teaching and learning environments. In addition, consultation assistance to faculty and graduate teaching assistants for integrating Web and internet communications tools and strategies into their courses was provided.

Since the demise of UCET in 2004 there is little provided by UF in the way of faculty development that focuses on the enhancement of teaching and learning, although there is a Faculty Development Office under the Provost which provides several services that UCET had implemented. There are several links in the Faculty Development section of the Provost's Web site under the heading of "Teacher-Scholar Development"

<http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/facdev/develop/index.shtml>.

For the past three years, the Provost's Office has sponsored a one-day Advisers Workshop. This professional development opportunity focuses on strategies for effective academic advising and is open to faculty and staff involved in academic advising. The workshop is coordinated by the Undergraduate Advising Council.

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has provided its faculty with an annual one-day Teaching Enhancement Symposium beginning in 2001. This symposium includes sessions on teaching methods, professional development, and student mentoring. Faculty, advising staff, and graduate students actively participate in the symposium, which has a typical attendance of 200-250. Feedback on these symposia has been consistently high. CALS also has a Teaching Resource Center (TRC) housed in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication. The TRC assists with programming for the Teaching Enhancement Symposium as well as provides workshops on teaching/learning/advising topics. CALS and the TRC have begun a program to support new faculty (and other interested faculty) called Teacher's College. The purpose of Teacher's College is to assist faculty members in IFAS seeking to improve their teaching skills and engage as a community of practice around learner-centered teaching.

A number of our sister institutions have teaching centers worthy of emulation (University of Virginia; Texas-Austin; and North Carolina – Chapel Hill to name a few). Having resources where faculty and teaching assistants can go for help is critical for a top tier research university such as UF. To ensure that UF provides the highest quality of education to our undergraduates it is critical that we find ways to enhance the instructional skills of faculty and graduate teaching assistants. Additionally, for our tenure-track faculty, teaching effectiveness has become a more important element in the tenure and promotion process.

#### Recommendations

- Reinstitute UCET or some similar Teaching Effectiveness Center as soon as practicable.
- Further increase the center's effectiveness with a plan to support *increased collaboration* with the other college-specific faculty centers.
- This collaboration will help create a network of College centers - effectively leveraging college and campus resources (including national resources) for faculty and GTAs, campus wide.
- With regard to advising, the responsibility related to academic questions on degree requirements falls primarily on the colleges or more appropriately the departments, where specific questions on degree programs can be addressed. However, there are skills related to the process of advising that transcend the specifics of academic programs that could well benefit from university-wide programs and support.

### **Faculty-Student Interaction**

For the purposes of this report, "faculty-student interaction" refers to interactions outside the formal classroom setting. The quality and extent of faculty-student interactions have positive effects on student learning, grade point average, intellectual self-concept, problem solving, critical thinking, and student retention. These gains may be even greater for minority students, especially when these students interact with faculty who are in the same minority group (Noel and Smith 1996<sup>6</sup>, Lundberg and Schreiner 2004<sup>7</sup>, Cole 2007<sup>8</sup>). Listed in increasing quality,

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<sup>6</sup> Noel, R.C., Smith, S.S. (1996). *Self-disclosure of college students to faculty: The influence of ethnicity. Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 88-94.

faculty-student interactions can be characterized by five typologies: disengagement, incidental contact, functional interaction, personal interaction, and mentoring. Our goal should be to provide all undergraduates with opportunities for meaningful, high-quality, personal interactions with university faculty. There are several ways that this goal can be accomplished.

Small courses specifically designed to increase interaction such as the First-Year Florida classes offer particularly good opportunities for incoming students to initiate faculty-student interactions. Students should be given explicit information about the benefits of building a strong mentoring relationship with a faculty member. Additionally, faculty should create an environment that encourages students to interact during office hours. One successful strategy is to convert office hours into a small discussion group, with students being allowed to come and go. This can also include more relaxed “brown bag” lunches.

Faculty mentoring of students involved in research, creative work, or other activities outside the classroom can provide a high-quality, meaningful interaction. A variety of very successful programs exist at UF, but these should be centralized and organized with the goal that participation in such a program becomes part of the typical undergraduate experience. One good example of how UF facilitates good faculty-student interactions is the Faculty-In-Residence program.

More effort and resources should be invested into facilitating and sponsoring faculty-student interaction in an informal setting. Among other universities, activities include faculty participating in or organizing meals with students (whether on campus, at the faculty member’s home, or at local restaurants), faculty or students organizing extended trips (e.g., to national academic or scientific meetings, to museums or cultural events, on bicycling or hiking excursions), readings or showing of films followed by discussions, team sports activities, and weekly lunch seminars.

There is a clear technology gap between faculty and students, with many students finding online interactions to be quite rewarding (e.g., online chats, Twitter, Facebook and other social networking sites). Faculty participation in such activities is low but is likely to increase. Effort and resources should be put towards encouraging and facilitating the appropriate participation of faculty in such interactions outside the context of formal online courses.

That the university values high-quality, meaningful faculty-student interactions can be most clearly demonstrated by providing the opportunity for faculty to explicitly identify these efforts on the Faculty Activity Report. This would provide an essential incentive for this invaluable aspect of a high-quality undergraduate experience.

### Recommendations

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<sup>7</sup> Lundberg, C.A., Schreiner, L.A. (2004). *Quality and Frequency of Faculty-Student Interaction as Predictors of Learning: An Analysis by Student Race/Ethnicity*. *Journal of College Student Development*, Sep/Oct.

<sup>8</sup> Cole, D. (2007). *Do Interracial Interactions Matter? An Examination of Student-Faculty Contact and Intellectual Self-Concept*. *The Journal of Higher Education* 78.3 (2007) 249-281.

- The role of faculty in these programs should be expanded to ensure that all students have a personal interaction with at least one UF faculty member during their first semester.
- For programs in which undergraduate advising is performed solely by staff, particular attention should be paid to providing opportunities for students to interact with faculty outside the classroom setting.
- More effort and resources should be invested into facilitating and sponsoring faculty-student interaction in an informal setting. As a first step, resources could be provided for sponsoring faculty-student lunches or dinners.
- Identify ways to facilitate and encourage faculty interactions with students via more common online communication venues.
- The Faculty Activity Report should reflect a faculty member's efforts towards enhancement of faculty-student interactions.

### **The Residential Experience at the University of Florida**

Residence halls are an important component in many undergraduate students' lives. Besides simply providing a place to sleep, residence halls (and Greek houses) provide a source of companionship, community, and can be the center of a student's social activity. These buildings and the staff within them can help make UF a little smaller, provide an enhanced connection to the University, and provide support for the learning that occurs in the classroom.

The undergraduate residential experience at the University of Florida impacts approximately 7500 (21.4% of all UF undergraduates) students each year in 24 residence halls. As of fall 2008, 62% of these students are first-year students, 21% sophomores, 11% juniors, and 6% seniors. Fifty-eight percent are female; 42% are male. Currently 23% of on-campus residents reside in living learning communities in which Housing and Residence Education partners with a college or another department to collaboratively offer specific programs and services to residents who share common interests, characteristics, or majors.

The GatorWell program from the Student Health Care Center has satellite offices located in the Springs Residential Complex and Jennings Hall where residents can take advantage of GatorWell services, staff and programs. The faculty-in-Residence program is structured to promote interaction between students and faculty via out of classroom interactions [http://www.housing.ufl.edu/aie/aie\\_facultyinres.html](http://www.housing.ufl.edu/aie/aie_facultyinres.html). Currently there are six faculty-in-residence living in residence halls in Broward Hall, Tolbert Hall, Lakeside Residential Complex, and the Honors Residential College at Hume Hall. Over 40 hours of academic advising occurs in the residence halls each week.

When considering best practices, UF's Department of Housing and Residence Education (HRE) would be identified as one that is helping to set a national standard for housing operations, particularly due to the fact that most of HRE's operations (maintenance, custodial, IT, personnel, etc.) are under one umbrella in-house rather than being outsourced. According to the Director of Housing and Residence Education, Norbert Dunkel, there are areas in which HRE could continue to move forward at UF given the appropriate resources.

These areas include funding, Greek housing, and living learning communities. In terms of funding, donations for building renovations would be a welcome addition to the current housing budget. Opportunities exist for donors to name residence halls or potentially name new residence halls. There is an ongoing pilot program in which housing has contracted with one Greek house to provide selected services. The success of this program has led to a request to extend the pilot program to additional Greek housing units. Also, enhancing the living learning communities that exist on campus could include allowing more upper-class and graduate students from various disciplines live in the halls to serve as role models, tutors, and mentors to the freshman and sophomore residents. Compensation could include reduced rent in exchange for the graduate student's interactions with the undergraduates.

#### Recommendations:

- Link more First-Year Florida (or other classes) to residence halls and possibly off-campus housing. Residents of the hall or complex would be able to gather in a commons area suitable for seminar-type instruction and the instructor would go to the hall or the complex to teach the course.
- Create a position to raise funds for housing (perhaps ½ time and shared with another office). Fundraising is essential to any academic or support unit on campus. A staff position dedicated to this effort would enhance the facilities and services available to students in the residence halls.
- Link credited courses with residence hall learning communities. This concept is similar to the first recommendation above. Currently, the Career Exploration Community residents have the option of registering for a 1 credit career development course to enhance their experience in the community.
- Explore creation of a living learning community in which students live all four years in the same residence hall.
- Create a living learning community in which residents have the opportunity to live from matriculation to graduation if they so desire. The concept is similar to that of the residential colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

### **Global Competence and International Education**

The majority of UF's current practice on global competency and international education consists of UF undergraduates who study abroad. The results of the task force's brief senior survey indicated over 89% of the students engaging in study abroad while at UF rated this experience as excellent. This was the highest rating of any of the experiences we want our students to have as undergraduates at UF. In 2007-2008, 2,222 (6.5% of the undergraduate student population) students studied abroad through UF programs, with exchange agreements, through other colleges, or with independent study abroad providers. Six study abroad advisers serve the whole population. The Warrington College of Business has two full-time advisers and a part-time graduate assistant to advise their students about study abroad.

In addition to study abroad, there are co-curricular opportunities for domestic students to work with international students on their English skills and on their cultural adjustment to the United States. Finally, language requirements exist to help expose students to other cultures.

In reviewing best practices a number were identified, some of which UF already does on a limited bases, such as the grants program to assist faculty in internationalizing their courses. The program at Georgia Tech in particular received strong support from the task force members and seems promising for implementation at UF given that it may be less resource intensive, at least initially, than some others.

Georgia Tech's International Plan offers a unique program for its students to develop global competence. It is a challenging four-year program that works in tandem with an undergraduate's academic curriculum to produce globally competent citizens. Successful completion of the program results in a special "International Plan" designation on the Georgia Tech degree and transcript. The program builds global competence by requiring students to engage in a minimum of twenty-six weeks of international experience (work, research, or study) related to their discipline, to develop a proficiency in a second language, and to take internationally oriented coursework.

This experience provides students a deeper global competency than traditional international opportunities. Each participating Georgia Tech degree program in the International Plan has integrated international studies, language acquisition, and overseas experience into the traditional Bachelor of Science degree that works best for that specific discipline. This would mean early interventions by advisers and faculty to encourage students to pursue this opportunity. The overall goal of the program would be to institutionalize global competency and international education as a value of a UF education.

#### Recommendations

- Offer an International Certificate similar to Georgia Tech's plan (outlined above). This offers a much more substantial option for students who are highly interested in a thorough international experience.
- The opportunity to study abroad should be more strongly promoted through undergraduate opportunities as well as through courses.
- Faculty and staff who are trained and willing to help freshmen and sophomores plan for study abroad in terms of curriculum, financial aid, etc., should be identified. This would greatly increase the number of students who study abroad.
- Faculty should be supported and encouraged to identify ways to internationalize their syllabus to give a more global perspective to their topics.

#### **Internship (Experiential Learning) Opportunities**

Internships are generally defined as work-related experiences that usually last one semester but may be longer. Internship requirements and participation rates vary both across and within UF colleges. Although most colleges do not require internships, they are "strongly encouraged" as part of a culminating undergraduate experience and are included in the list of five experiences undergraduates at UF are encouraged to have.

According to 2008 NSSE survey results, approximately 51% of UF seniors reported having completed a practicum, internship, field experience, or clinical assignment, compared to 63% of

seniors at UF peer institutions. Students pursue internships in one of two primary ways: for academic credit or non-credit. Based on a 3-year average for AY 2005-2008, course data indicate approximately 2,000 students annually complete an internship for academic credit. Impressionistic data strongly suggest many more students complete internships for which academic credit is either not sought or not available.

In terms of what might be considered best practice in the area of internships or experiential learning, areas noted were better integration with general education and ensuring an interdisciplinary focus with strong faculty mentoring as critical to successful experiences. Programs that have institutionalized the expectation for internships are most likely to have the strongest programs where both faculty and students value the experience and where participation is an expectation prior to graduation.

### Recommendations

- Ensure faculty supervision and support.
- More effective integration with general education.
- Increase opportunities for an interdisciplinary focus via experiential learning, degree programs and research.
- Institutionalize by creating a value for faculty involvement and emphasizing the mentoring relationship with faculty and student.
- Encourage students and departments to ensure the student receives course credit. This is an essential element if a stronger faculty-student mentoring relationship is to be established.

### **Service Learning and Civic Engagement**

At the University of Florida our students are actively engaged in community service as individuals and through student organizations. In the report for the President's Community Service Honor Roll, 13,103 UF students conducted 75,205 hours of community service in the 2007-2008 academic year. In addition to this, 752 students engaged in academic service-learning. The Center for Leadership and Service within the Division of Student Affairs coordinates a plethora of service and civic engagement opportunities for students. Many student organizations also perform community service as groups, raise awareness, and some conduct service trips. Academic service-learning is offered in some disciplines; however, this continues to be an area in need of improvement at the University of Florida.

An education from a land grant institution expects service and responsibility to one's state and community including the global community. Service learning and civic engagement can be woven into the fabric of the undergraduate experience including all of the areas of interest reviewed in this document: "living learning" communities of the residence halls; faculty-student research/interaction; international study; lifelong learning; internships as capstone experiences; and leadership. In reviewing best practices, a number of other universities (Georgetown, Stanford, Utah) have focused goals that connect academic study with community and public service to strengthen communities and develop effective public leaders. These programs aspire to develop aware, engaged and thoughtful citizens who make meaningful contributions to others.

### Recommendations

- Service and civic engagement are acknowledged values crucial to a University of Florida education. The strength of this value should be illustrated through greater emphasis in the Five Undergraduate Experiences shared with potential students through the admissions process and at Preview.
- Expand the number of credits for First-Year Florida (FYF)(2 or 3) to provide greater conversation and practice in the areas of service and civic engagement.
- Address global competency in FYF to facilitate students' learning about social issues and their implications for a global society.
- Faculty should be encouraged to teach service-learning courses and utilize community-based research. Additional training could be offered to prepare faculty for this role.
- This emphasis should be highlighted in the tenure and promotion review process to encourage faculty to engage students in experiential learning and increased engagement with the community – all of which are documented outcomes of service-learning and community based research.
- Finally, community service and social responsibility should be infused in the undergraduate experience through residence halls, the Common Reading Program, freshmen convocation, First-Year Florida, and in common general education requirements such as ENC 1102 and other communication classes.

### **Promotion of Life-Long Learning**

The world which our undergraduates will experience in their lifetime will be markedly different from the one which we face today. The ability to continue to learn both within one's area of work and outside it has never been more important. The university's role in encouraging lifelong learning starts when students are at UF, helping them "learn how to learn" and fostering curiosity about the world around them. Once the students graduate, the university can become a resource to help them keep up to date in their chosen field and provide information about anything in which they develop an interest. There are new internet-based tools which can make this a golden age for universities to provide lifelong learning for their graduates and for the public in general.

Two key elements to lifelong learning is the ability to teach oneself outside of a traditional structured course and develop intellectual curiosity. These are two of the most difficult things to teach or encourage. At the undergraduate level, students participating in a research experience, internship, or other capstone experience will be learning outside a structured course. They will ask open-ended questions which do not necessarily have straightforward right answers or even definitive answers, and they will seek out answers and solutions creatively using all resources at their disposal - not just the assigned reading for a course. This is the paradigm for life-long learning. Once a student has engaged in this kind of activity, they should be able to replicate it throughout life.

### Recommendation:

- Increase opportunities for the development of intellectual curiosity and the appreciation for learning as a life-long pursuit via experiential learning, research, and interdisciplinary degree programs.

## **Leadership Development/Co-curricular Activities**

The current practices group took the initiative to explore the co-curricular aspect of the undergraduate experience, including leadership activities of UF students and identifying recommendations that could become best practices on our campus. Research indicates that students who get involved on campus have higher GPAs, are more satisfied with their college experience, and are more willing to give back to their institution once they graduate. The term co-curricular is purposefully being used in lieu of the term extra-curricular.

Co-curricular activities allow students to apply knowledge and skills learned inside the classroom to real situations. We believe that all entities of the university are necessary to educate the whole student, so the activities outside of the classroom are to be considered co-curricular and importance should be placed on their contribution to the educational outcomes for participating students.

At UF there are over 700 student organizations with slightly less than 75,000 members listed, with over 118,500 hours of documented service and \$1,868,489 contributed to various charities locally and nationally. The value of these experiences is recognized by graduate and professional schools as well as future employers.

Finding ways to more effectively document student leadership and co-curricular activities would facilitate faculty and adviser identification for nominations for prestigious awards as well as letters of recommendation to graduate or professional schools. The co-curricular transcript could be useful in conjunction with an academic transcript for more fully describing the student's engagement on campus. Students will also be able to track their own involvement and gain a perspective on the breadth of their campus experiences. Such a transcript would verify active membership in organizations and leadership positions the student has held.

### Recommendations

- Create a co-curricular transcript for students to supplement the academic transcript.
- A co-curricular transcript serves as an official record of a student's involvement on campus and provides credibility to student involvement outside of the classroom.
- Define co-curricular activities as noted above and develop a value statement related to the extent these activities play in developing an educated and productive citizen.

## **Conclusion**

The task force considered it a privilege to approach this project which addresses an area at the very heart of UF's identity and mission. The project, however, is an ongoing one. This report will need to be vetted fully by the university community, amended as appropriate, adopted and then implemented.

It should also be considered an evolving document that is revisited on a regular basis and reviewed in consideration of the developing needs of the university. While this report concludes the official charge of the task force, we remain, as individuals, eager to assist in the next stages

of work necessary to create the type of undergraduate experience our talented and very bright students deserve.

Once decisions are made related to the priorities supported by the President, Provost and Board of Trustees and the implementation plan completed it is important that ongoing assessment occur. This assessment will ensure that we continue to move forward in the process of actualizing the vision of undergraduate education at the University of Florida. Namely that, “University of Florida graduates will have a well-developed capacity for intellectual inquiry, demonstrated competency in a chosen discipline, and a strong sense of personal, social, and global responsibility”.

The complete reports of the sub-committees’ findings in the key areas summarized above can be found on the Provost web page at [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search\\_committees/UndergradCurriculum/](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/search_committees/UndergradCurriculum/).

**FINAL REPORT  
FROM THE  
GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE – HUMANITIES  
RE: HUM2305: WHAT IS THE GOOD LIFE?**

**OVERVIEW**

The General Education Task Force – Humanities recommends that the university move forward with its initiative to offer a signature, common experience in the Humanities for *all* first-year students beginning in the summer B semester of 2012. In support of this, the members of the Task Force, which began this project in April 2009, present this report on the genesis and evolution of the course (HUM2305: *What is the Good Life?*) and recommendations for its future. Sample course syllabi and task force information can be found at the following websites:

<http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/hum-course.aspx>

<http://fora.aa.ufl.edu/Provost/TaskForces/General-Education-Task-Force-Humanities>

**GENESIS**

The genesis for the course, HUM2305: *What is the Good Life?*, is the report of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education at the University of Florida (UF), where the recommendations include a charge to develop “a signature UF experience . . . using a themed approach” for students and a call to “reexamine the purpose of the general education curriculum, articulate this purpose in all processes related to the general education curriculum, [and] reconsider ways in which the curriculum is fulfilled . . .” Both of these recommendations reflect similar efforts at most, if not all, of UF’s peer institutions. The full report is available at

<http://fora.aa.ufl.edu/docs//56//UGTaskForceReport.pdf>.

While one course itself obviously cannot accomplish all these goals, the General Education Task Force – Humanities was charged with leading this initiative. Indeed, the Humanities is an excellent place for the university to start; that is, since one of the purposes of a common, signature experience should be to engage students in life’s bigger, and sometimes more esoteric, and often times not quantifiable, questions, the university must provide a conduit through which these questions can be explored. Clearly, the Humanities is that conduit.

With this in mind, the Task Force established the following desiderata:

1. The course should offer a common, signature experience for UF students.
2. It should serve as an invitation to the humanities and to a lifetime of reflection on the human condition.

3. It should be interdisciplinary and draw, insofar as practicable, on all the humanities resources at UF (all relevant areas, departments and units, including the Harn Museum and Phillips Center for the Performing Arts).
4. It should be cross-cultural and draw on the full range of human experience across the world and through time.
5. It should aim, over the long run, to found a community of humanistic inquiry at the university that reaches to all humanities disciplines and involves the broader Gainesville community, and reaches out through invited speakers and collaborative ventures beyond the university.
6. It should be rigorous and hold students to a high standard.
7. It should inculcate skills in
  - a. analysis
  - b. argumentation
  - c. writing
  - d. communication, and in
  - e. close reading, looking, and listening
8. It should involve a small classroom experience in which students engage in discussion.
9. It should involve comments on and evaluation of papers with respect to content, organization, style, and mechanics.
10. It should include significant, effective, on-line support.
11. It should not be hard to administer.

In the two years that the Task Force worked on this project with these guiding principles serving as the foundation, HUM2305 has evolved into an excellent example of what a large public institution such as UF can accomplish at its best: A collaborative effort of faculty with interdisciplinary expertise working together to produce a course that offers students a signature experience unique to the university. Indeed, the course has evolved to such a degree that it is now highlighted as one of seven primary Presidential Initiatives at the university:

<http://www.president.ufl.edu/initiatives/>

## **THE COURSE**

One of the challenges the Humanities Task Force faced was to develop a course model that adhered to our established criteria but that also never lost sight of the intended audience—first-year students, most of whom are just a couple of months removed from their high school curricula. Additionally, though each year students matriculating to UF generally have become much more competitive on a national level, the fact is that educational disparities still exist throughout the state, and as such, a common, signature course such as HUM2305 must not only be academically rigorous, but also serve as an introduction to university-level critical thinking in the Humanities. This is particularly important given that in many cases the course might be the *only* course many of the students will take at UF that will challenge them to think in ways that *only* Humanistic studies can.

For this reason, the Task Force zeroed in on what has become the central theme for our course—*What is the Good Life?* Not only does this subject present the opportunity to consider life's bigger questions, it is also open-ended enough to show what the Humanities has to offer students new to a university setting: Not the answers, but the tools for contemplating the question.

The Task Force then concluded that the best method of delivery for a three-credit course is a combination of two weekly lectures of 180 students delivered by faculty members selected by the departments/colleges (CLAS, CFA, DCP) represented on the Task Force, supplemented by discussion sections of 20 students maximum led by experienced graduate assistants, or teaching preceptors.

Course content is divided into what can broadly be described as three categories. First, the "Gateways" represent an introduction to the common themes and components of the course, such as readings and multi-media presentations. "Pillars," the second, are the materials that each faculty member brings to the course to explore the themes of the Gateways in greater detail. Last, the Task Force determined that a common, signature course such as HUM2305 should require students to participate in outside activities that expose them to opportunities unique to UF that they may otherwise never find, including a performance at the Phillips Center, a cell-phone guided tour at the Harn Museum, and a lecture on the Humanities given by an outside speaker.

Gateways that are consistent with the overall aims of the course were selected on these guiding principles:

1. All the principal disciplines must be represented fairly, adequately, and properly. The course should be interdisciplinary and draw, insofar as practicable, on all the humanities resources at UF (all relevant areas, departments and units, including the Harn Museum and Performing Arts Center).
2. The set of gateway readings taken as a whole should represent a diverse range of cultural perspectives from a range of places and eras. The course should be cross-cultural and draw on the full range of human experience across the world and through time.
3. Gateway readings prescribed for each week must remain at a manageable length, in the range of 10-15 total pages.
4. Supplemental materials on the gateways (including short introductions that provide socio-historical contexts) should be made available to instructors to help them prepare lectures that are interdisciplinary.
5. Within the standardized pattern of common readings across all sections each semester, the pattern leaves sufficient flexibility for instructors to introduce Pillar readings.

The first pilot section of the course was taught in Spring 2010 when three members of the Task Force offered a small section of the work in progress to students in the Honors Program. In AY 2010-11, larger pilot sections were taught, and currently,

three sections of the course are being offered with enrollment caps of 180 students, with an additional two lecture sections planned for Spring 2012.

Pilot sections have given the Task Force the opportunity to fine tune the course through consistent and on-going feedback from faculty, graduate assistants, and enrolled students. Though the guiding principles of the course have remained the same, the course syllabus and materials and logistics have been vetted such that the Task Force firmly believes that the course, HUM2305: *What is the Good Life?*, is ready for its next step.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The General Education Task Force – Humanities confidently recommends the following actions:

1. The university should move forward with mandating the signature, common experience course, HUM2305: *What is the Good Life?*, to all first-year students beginning with the 2012 matriculating class. This will be accomplished by offering 11 faculty-led lecture sections of 180 students and 99 discussion sections of 20 students each in summer B 2012 and 12 faculty-led lecture sections of 180 students and 108 discussion sections of 20 students each in Fall 2012 and Spring 2013.
2. This distribution of the course will require the following commitments from the colleges involved with this project (CLAS, CFA, and DCP):
  - a. 11 faculty members in summer B and 12 each for fall and spring.
  - b. 33 experienced Teaching Preceptors in summer B and 36 each for fall and spring.
3. Last, the university administration shall appoint a faculty-based steering committee that will be charged with overseeing the on-going intellectual evolution of the course.

## **SUMMARY**

The General Education Task Force – Humanities has embraced the challenge presented by the Task Force on Undergraduate Education to develop the university's first common, signature experience for new students. The Task Force has been energized by the potential of this course to expose new students to the breadth of resources available at UF for engaging in the principal questions of the Humanities and for acquiring the principal skills of our respective disciplines: Attention to detail, discernment of subtle differences, problem solving, patience, creativity, and careful analysis followed by responsible synthesis. In short, the General Education Task Force - Humanities is confident that the course, HUM2305: *What is the Good Life?*, accomplishes these goals and is a worthy, and pedagogically sound, addition to the undergraduate curriculum at UF.

**SUBMITTED BY THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE – HUMANITIES ON  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2011**

# The Grand Challenges Core

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## Transforming UF's General Education

**Bernard A. Mair, Associate Provost**

**11/26/2013**

The Preeminence Bill SB 1076 allows UF to require 9 – 12 credits of unique coursework in all undergraduate programs that cannot be earned through any acceleration mechanism. This document describes how these courses will be incorporated into UF's General Education Program and includes a call for proposals from undergraduate-degree-granting colleges.

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## Introduction

In our continued efforts to improve the educational experience for all undergraduate students, the University of Florida is developing an outstanding, distinctive, unique General Education Program (GEP). A focused cohesive GEP plays a crucial role in providing every UF student with a liberal education that complements rigorous disciplinary programs.

We are transforming our GEP into one of the highest quality, woven into the fabric of the UF experience and serving as a bridge between, an introduction to, and an integrator of, seemingly disparate disciplines. This program should be focused, cohesive, interesting, lively, engaging, and reflect the institutional focus on research and creative works, knowledge creation, and the mission of educating people from diverse backgrounds to “address the needs of the world’s societies”<sup>1</sup>. The current cafeteria-style GEP that allows students to take practically an infinite number of course combinations from a list of over a thousand courses, is fragmented with little relationship to institutional goals, and is furthermore diluted by credits that are taken at other educational institutions, including high schools<sup>2</sup>. A large percentage of our students complete less than a half of their general education credits at the university so are missing important components of a university-level liberal education. They also lack common experiences that play an important role in developing a cohesive intellectual community with institutional culture and goals. In addition, the UF Task Force on Undergraduate Education found that the courses in the GEP consisted mainly of courses that double-counted as prerequisites for disciplinary majors with little regard to the goals of general education. These findings were echoed in the concerns of state legislators in 2012 leading to a statewide revision of the general education requirements that mandates a common core of courses from which five courses must be chosen<sup>3</sup>. The university also responded to this report by developing a single Humanities general education course required for all students.<sup>4</sup> To continue the transformation to meet institutional educational goals, the university is developing a discrete number of thematic, interdisciplinary bundles of courses around substantive and timely topics. These courses will be used to transform the General Education Program by requiring all UF students to take a set of three general education courses (nine credits) that are unique to UF and cannot be replaced by any accelerated mechanism or from courses from other postsecondary institution. Only transfers with an AA degree will be exempt from these courses due to the statewide articulation agreement.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/uf-mission/Pages/home.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> “Task Force on Undergraduate Education Report”, UF, Jan. 2010.

<sup>3</sup> <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/statewide-gen-ed-core-project.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/hum-course.aspx>

## Grand Challenges Courses

The “Grand Challenges” were U.S. policy terms set in the 1980’s to describe “fundamental problems of science and engineering with broad applications, whose solution would be enabled by high-performance computing resources ... Today, the Grand Challenges are interpreted in a much broader sense ...”<sup>5</sup> In fact, today there are many “Grand Challenges” that have nothing to do with science or engineering - such as “Securing Water for Food, All Children Reading, and Making All Voices Count”<sup>6</sup>. We believe that Grand Challenges should also include big questions, both contemporary and enduring, of importance in understanding the human condition, human cultures and society, and the natural and physical worlds. Thus, we believe that a course that engages students to consider the basic question of “What is The Good Life?” through the lens of a cluster of Humanities disciplines is suitably characterized as a grand challenge.

## The Grand Challenges Core

Making “What is The Good Life?” a mandatory Humanities course for all UF students effective 2012, was the first step towards transforming our GEP. We now seek to extend that structure to the Natural and Social Sciences general education areas to complete the transformation.

The goal is to develop a general education program with courses specifically designed to achieve the goals of the program, not simply service courses for majors, and not driven by interests of specific colleges or majors. The courses will be unique to UF and cannot be substituted for by any other courses from outside the institution, thus creating a set of common experiences for our students that will set them apart from graduates of other universities. The new GEP should include an introduction to disciplines that are often not included in high school curriculums, as an introduction to the so-called “found majors”; a feature of the existing GEP that should be maintained. Therefore, these courses should allow participation from a broad cross-section of faculty in most (if not all) disciplines. The goal is to develop a GEP that

1. Is cohesive with a clearly identifiable focus and having a systematic approach to achieving the goals of a liberal education
2. Creates common experiences for all undergraduates, unique to UF
3. Develops an intellectual community through the study of important, timely issues

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<sup>5</sup> “A Report of the National Science Foundation Advisory Committee for Cyberinfrastructure Task Force on Grand Challenges”, NSF, March 2011.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/grandchallenges>

4. Engages students in the search for knowledge: changing their attitudes from that of a knowledge consumer to a knowledge producer
5. Enables students to transfer knowledge between disciplines – to see how different disciplines interact in complex problem-solving
6. Links with the research mission and faculty of the university, encouraging students to pursue research opportunities
7. Provides the foundations of a liberal education for lifelong learning and meaningful careers and lives.

To meet these conditions, the new GEP will include a limited number (at most five) of courses in each general education area focusing on multidisciplinary Grand Challenges. To distinguish these new Humanities, Natural and Social Sciences courses from other general education courses, including the newly developed statewide core, we will refer to them collectively as the “Grand Challenges Core”. This terminology also serves to set our program apart from “signature experiences” at other universities – branding this signature program as one that seeks to develop the learning outcomes of a liberal education within the specific, but not restrictive, context of the recognized set of “Grand Challenges”. A few universities<sup>7</sup> have specialized programs that engage undergraduates (primarily engineers) in looking at Grand Challenges, and Princeton University<sup>8</sup> has an impressive research program, but to our knowledge this is the first time the Grand Challenges have been made a mandatory component of a general education program

We are now requesting proposals from colleges that grant undergraduate degrees for multidisciplinary general education courses that focus on “Grand “Challenges”. These proposals MUST be submitted and supported by deans of undergraduate-degree-granting colleges<sup>9</sup>. A few (maximum of 10) of these proposals will be chosen for full course development with the goal of being included in the GEP effective 2015. Specifically, as of 2015, the university’s GEP will require every student to take one of a small number of Grand Challenges courses in the Natural and Social Sciences. To be clear, the Natural Sciences consist of courses in the Biological (B) and Physical (P) Science areas as defined in the general education program<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. University of Iowa, University of Rhode island, Western New England College

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.princeton.edu/grandchallenges/>

<sup>9</sup> These colleges are: Agricultural and Life Sciences, Business, Design Construction and Planning, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Health and Human Performance, Journalism and Communications, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Public Health and Health Professions

<sup>10</sup> See <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/program-area-objectives.aspx>

## The 2015 UF General Education Program

Implementation of the Grand Challenges Core and Statewide Core, will result in significant changes to the UF General Education Program effective 2015. As a result, all undergraduate degree programs will need to be revised to incorporate these changes. We include an overview of the resulting program to allow for advance planning. Both core programs are still being developed so all details of the courses are not currently available, but we hope this overview will still provide useful information for planning purposes. A comparison with the current general education requirements<sup>11</sup> may prove useful.

The 2015 general education program will require students to complete a total of 36 credit hours of general education courses in five areas of: Composition (C), Mathematics (M), Humanities (H), Natural Sciences (B/P), and Social Sciences (S). These credits must be obtained by taking 15 credits in the Statewide Core; 9 credits in the UF Grand Challenges Core; and an additional 3 credits in Mathematics. An additional 9 credits is to be distributed across the areas of Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, with a maximum of 6 credits from each of these areas. These 36 credit hours must also include 3 credit hours of courses with the Diversity designation and 3 credit hours with the International designation. The current Writing Requirement of 24,000 words will remain in effect.

### Objectives for Grand Challenges Courses

Courses submitted for consideration for inclusion in the Grand Challenges Core must meet the following objectives. Each course should

1. Be interdisciplinary; involving participation from faculty in at least three undergraduate-degree-granting colleges, in three distinct disciplines.
2. Meet the objectives for the Social Sciences (S) or Natural Sciences (B or P) general education (GE) designation (see <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/program-area-objectives.aspx> for area objectives).
3. Focus on a topic/problem of major current global interest that can be analyzed using the tools/methods/skills developed in the course. Examples include identified “grand challenges” such as:
  - a. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grand Challenges  
(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/04/09/21st-century-grand-challenges>)

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<sup>11</sup> <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/gen-ed-requirements.aspx>

- b. Grand Challenges for Development (<http://www.usaid.gov/grandchallenges>)
- c. Grand Challenges for Engineering ([www.engineeringchallenges.org/](http://www.engineeringchallenges.org/))
- d. Grand Challenges in Global Health  
(<http://www.grandchallenges.org/Pages/Default.aspx>)

The course does not need to be included on a recognized list of “grand challenges” but the topic should be of such importance that it could be considered a “grand challenge”.

- 4. Include a critical analysis of the problem from various perspectives including those that are relevant to the area of the applicable General Education designation(s).
- 5. Require students to explore possible solutions, or ideas that are significantly related, to some component of the identified problem. Ideally, students should be required to create or design a product or develop an idea, process, or system related to some aspect, or effect, of the problem of interest.
- 6. Require students to design solutions to multidisciplinary problems. The students may not have the technical skills or knowledge required to tackle any aspect of the particular challenge, but there must be some related problem that the student is required to address in a meaningful way.
- 7. Develop students’ creative thinking skills.
- 8. Develop students’ ability to communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.

### Prerequisites

The statewide core requires students to complete five general education courses, one in each of the five areas of Communication, Computation, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. All of these courses are lower division without prerequisites so can be completed early in the first year of postsecondary education. In fact, most students enter UF with credit for these courses through acceleration mechanisms. In order to guarantee a necessary degree of intellectual maturity and ability to handle the material, some courses in the Grand Challenges Core may require students to complete all or part of the statewide core as prerequisites. The prerequisites can only include courses in the statewide general education core. For example, another grand challenge course cannot be used as a prerequisite. Furthermore, prerequisites cannot require specific courses in the statewide core; they can only require completion of the statewide core in a specific general education area. For example, “Completion of the Statewide Core in Social Sciences and Communication” could be used as a prerequisite for a course in the Grand Challenges Core.

## Call for Proposals for Grand Challenges Courses

The Office of the Provost is inviting undergraduate-degree-granting colleges to submit proposals for general education courses in the Natural and Social Sciences areas for the Grand Challenges Core.

Proposals do not need to include a complete syllabus but must include the following information.

1. State the “grand challenge” that is addressed in this course and provide a justification for your claim that this problem should be regarded as a grand challenge.
2. What disciplines are covered in the course?
3. How will faculty in the different disciplines be incorporated in the course?
4. State the course objectives and explain how they align with the grand challenges courses.
5. What General Education designations will you request for this course? Explain how the course meets the objectives for these areas.
6. What are the required texts?
7. List the weekly course schedule of topics to be covered.
8. How will the students be graded? Include a brief description of the types of assignments (homework, quizzes, tests, papers). Indicate if the tests/exams will be done online, or in face to face environment, proctored, or un-proctored.
9. Describe the structure of the course. For example large lecture with small discussion sections, 100% online with no discussion sections, hybrid with 50% online and 50% face to face, etc. Will the course be taught using any innovative pedagogy or technology? What enrollment will the course be able to handle?
10. Describe the administrative and management structure of the course. Will there be a course coordinator?
11. Proposals must include a budget with details for course development.
12. State all colleges that will contribute to this course. Include the names and signatures of college deans indicating agreement to offer, manage, and support this course.
13. Designate a single contact person for this proposal. All communication from the Provost’s Office regarding this proposal will be sent to this contact which will be responsible for maintaining communication with the colleges involved.

**Deadline:** Completed proposals must be received by midnight, March 31, 2014. Please submit all proposals by email to Ann Greene in the Office of Undergraduate Affairs at [agreene@aa.ufl.edu](mailto:agreene@aa.ufl.edu). Please call 352-846-1761 for additional information.

President Machen will make the awards by late April 2014 and colleges are expected to develop the courses during Summer 2014. The courses must be piloted in small sections in the 2014-15 academic year. Experience gained from the pilot program should be used to improve the courses to make them suitable for offering in 2015-16.

**UF CORE PROGRAM:**

**HISTORY &  
PATH FORWARD**



**2016**



# UF CORE PROGRAM: HISTORY AND PATH FORWARD

February 2016

Author: Angela S. Lindner, Associate Provost, UF Office of Undergraduate Affairs

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## ABSTRACT

In 2013, the State of Florida established legislation defining pre-eminence status for state research universities that meet specific benchmarks and allowing pre-eminent universities to offer a common educational experience for first-time-in-college (FTIC) students. The University of Florida took advantage of the opportunity to provide a shared experience for its students by initially developing and offering a humanities course, “What Is the Good Life?”, IUF1000 (formerly HUM2305), followed by establishing a framework for adding two additional 3-credit-hour courses, one in the Natural Sciences general education category (“The Challenge of Climate Change”) and one selected from the Social Sciences general education category (“People and Data” and “Extreme Events”). Concerns about the three-course program shared by faculty, staff, and students include the difficulty in managing the large enrollment over the first two years of a cohort’s UF experience, lack of meaningful connection among the three classes, and undue burden on

curricula in majors that have few elective options. To address these concerns, a new model for the UF Core Program is proposed.

This proposed model consists of 6-9 credit hours of a combination of coursework, experiential learning, and e-portfolio development that will thread the themes of meaning-making and purpose exploration throughout the program. In the next two years, the entire campus will engage in dialogue and planning for a Spring 2018 full pilot of this program prior to a full launch for the incoming Fall 2018 FTIC students.

Anticipated benefits and outcomes of this proposed UF Core Program include a deeper appreciation of a liberal education for life-long learning, increased persistence to degree, graduates who are confident in their life’s purpose and prepared for successful careers, and a distinguishing University of Florida “maker’s mark” on all undergraduates, thus consistent with the institution’s pre-eminent status.

## HISTORY OF UF CORE PROGRAM

As of July 1, 2013, any state research university in Florida meeting academic and research excellence standards outlined in Florida Statute 1001.7065 is designated as a “pre-eminent state research university.” The University of Florida has earned pre-eminent status each year since the inception of this statute. Among the various privileges afforded pre-eminent state research universities is the opportunity to provide a jointly shared educational experience for its FTIC students

(Florida Statute 1001.7065, 2015). The university may “stipulate that credit for such courses may not be earned through any acceleration mechanism,” thus requiring that all incoming FTIC students share this unique experience that ideally reflects the mission and values of the institution.

In the Fall 2012, the University of Florida established a Humanities course, “What Is the Good Life?” (then HUM2305; currently

IUF1000), as the corner stone for its shared signature experience for FTIC students. This course was crafted as a response to earlier discussions that led to the aforementioned Florida legislation, and, in part, to recommendations prepared by the 2010 UF Task Force on Undergraduate Education (Appendix 1, [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/Data/Sites/18/media/reports/ug\\_task\\_force\\_report.pdf](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/Data/Sites/18/media/reports/ug_task_force_report.pdf)).

This course was developed through collaboration among the Colleges of Design, Construction and Planning (DCP), Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), and the Arts (COTA) and first offered as a common experience in the Fall of 2010 (IUF1000, 2015). In November 2013, to complement this signature course, then Associate Provost of Undergraduate Affairs, Dr. Bernard Mair, disseminated a guiding document on “The Grand Challenges Core,” describing a structure for the addition of two 3-credit hour signature courses in the Social Sciences and Natural Sciences general education categories, respectively (Appendix 2). The stated goals of the Grand Challenges Core Program, anticipated at that time to launch in the Fall 2016, are the following:

- A program that is cohesive with a clearly identifiable focus and having a systematic approach to achieving the goals of a liberal education;
- A program that creates common experiences for all undergraduates, unique to UF;
- A program that develops an intellectual community through the study of important, timely issues;
- A program that engages students in the search for knowledge: changing their

attitudes from that of a knowledge consumer to a knowledge producer;

- A program that enables students to transfer knowledge between disciplines—to see how different disciplines interact in complex problem-solving;
- A program that links with the research mission and faculty of the university, encouraging students to pursue research opportunities;
- A program that provides the foundations of a liberal education for life-long learning and meaningful careers and lives.

Thus, the combination of IUF1000 with the two other courses would provide all FTIC students with an intentional and focused general education experience. Coinciding with the release of “The Grand Challenges Core” document, Dr. Mair released a call for proposals to all undergraduate-degree-granting colleges for new courses in either the Social Sciences or Natural Sciences general education category (Appendix 3). Successful proposals would shape courses that are interdisciplinary in nature, involving participation from faculty in at least three undergraduate, degree-granting, colleges in three different disciplines.

Proposed courses had to meet the objectives for the Social Sciences (S) or Natural Sciences (B or P) general education designation (GE) and focus on a topic/problem of major current global interest. Proposals were due on March 31, 2014, and selections were announced in April 2014 in anticipation of course development in the Summer 2014 and full launch in the Fall 2016.

Two courses, one from each category of proposals submitted, were selected to move forward in the course development stage: “The Challenge of Climate Change” in the Natural Sciences category and “An Informed Life: People and Data” in the Social Sciences category. The Colleges of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Design Construction and Planning, and Liberal Arts and Sciences collaborated in preparing the proposal for the Climate Change course (Appendix 4), while the Colleges of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Education, and Journalism and Communications prepared the People and Data course proposal (Appendix 5).

The Climate Change course objectives include exploration of the process of scientific inquiry, application of the scientific method to embrace uncertainty, development of hypothesis-driven solutions, and communication of scientific outcomes through teamwork and community building. The People and Data course’s overarching objectives are to provide students with a data literacy foundation for lifelong learning and citizenship and to engage students in the search for knowledge to understand the data and claims about data from multiple sources of information, to challenge claims, and to transfer this knowledge among disciplines. Both courses have been piloted. While the Climate Change course will be piloted again in the Spring 2016 term, the People and Data course will be redesigned for re-launch in a future

semester to address identified challenges in attracting student interest.

In the Summer of 2015, an additional Social Science course, entitled “Extreme Events,” proposed in 2014 by the Colleges of the Arts, Design Construction and Planning, Engineering, Health and Human Performance, Journalism and Communications, and Liberal Arts and Sciences, was selected for development and launch (Appendix 6). With the backdrop of an extreme event on a community (e.g., 2010 earthquake in Haiti), this course will introduce to students the value and importance of the social sciences interwoven with other participating disciplines in applying human-centered design to heal the impacted community towards resilience. Currently, this course is in the development stage with an anticipated pilot in Summer 2016 or Fall 2016.\*

Because of transition in the Associate Provost of Undergraduate Affairs office, the UF Office of the Provost announced in the Summer of 2015 that the launch of the full UF Core General Education Program would be postponed from Fall 2016 to Fall 2017. This postponement would allow the new Associate Provost to engage in campus-wide conversation and gain insights towards determining the optimal path forward for this pre-eminent signature experience.

*\*At the time of this publication, UFIC Director, Dr. Leo Vilallón, is developing a concept for an international-based course to also be included in the Social Science category.*

## FALL 2015 FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION OF CURRENT MODEL

Since accepting the role of Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs in September 2015, Dr. Angela Lindner has engaged many students, staff, faculty, and administrators from across campus in conversation about the UF Core. While these stakeholders expressed general support of a shared experience for each incoming class of students, widespread concern regarding the current model of the UF Core was expressed based on a variety of reasons.

First, a popular perception is that IUF1000 (What Is the Good Life?) does not serve all students well because of inconsistency in student experience, numerous negative reports from students themselves, and general lack of information about the course content, learning outcomes, and success in meeting the learning outcomes. Despite criticism of the course, many with whom Dr. Lindner spoke also admitted that some students have reported to them a positive experience, thus reinforcing their belief that the quality of instruction is inconsistent across all sections.

Evident in these discussions is the lack of information the campus now has concerning IUF1000's outcomes to date. For example, course director, Dr. Andy Wolpert, recently reported results of strong student satisfaction in the course, yet negative perceptions of the course linger on campus. In moving forward, the UF Office of Undergraduate Affairs will commit to providing status reports of the UF Core experiences to the greater UF community.

In addition, dissatisfaction was expressed in the Social Sciences and Natural Sciences courses currently selected for the UF Core. This dissatisfaction was less because of content and more because each is disconnected from the others with no meaningful common thread woven through them to unite and make meaning of the total experience for students. Concerns were expressed about the paucity of resources and lack of incentive to deliver these courses, and evidence to this fact bears out with IUF1000 in the struggle its director experiences in recruiting and retaining instructors.

In addition, those interviewed expressed skepticism in smoothly coordinating and delivering the three-course model, given the number of students required to pursue this core experience and the added burden on advisors in ensuring that students enroll in these courses prior to the completion of their second year.

Finally, those from programs with restrictive curricula requiring "lock-step" coursework (e.g., majors in engineering, architecture, the arts) expressed deep concern about the negative impacts that an additional nine credit hours would have on students and on the major-specific content of the curriculum. Adding the nine credit hours to the students' plans of study may leave students vulnerable to excess hours charges. Other programs are considering removing upper division technical electives from their curricula to accommodate the additional courses, thus threatening the quality of the degree and, not to mention, the level of preparation of the student for

her or his career, a concern echoed by various employers as well. Many recommended that all courses included in the core program incorporate the international (N) and/or diversity (D) content required by the university, thus providing some relief to those programs with “lock-step” coursework and already large total credit-hour requirements.

Despite the anxiety expressed about the UF Core Program as it currently is shaped, an overwhelming opinion of those interviewed embodied a hope that a core program could serve as a foundation for a unique, pre-eminent undergraduate experience at the University of Florida. The consensus is that the common core experience should have a clear and compelling purpose for the students, should promise to be transformational, not only for the students but also the institution as a whole, and should support the existing goals of the university.

Higher education institutions today are increasingly challenged to administer intentional and systematic support for students to identify their strengths, clarify their values, and develop a level of “grit” that will ensure persistence in their journey towards productive global citizenship. Recent studies in this area state that true higher learning is transformative, developmentally keyed, best understood as an apprenticeship, and requires as much intentionality about learning outside of the classrooms as within them (Clydesdale, 2015; Keeling and Hirsch, 2011; Nash and Murray, 2010). To this end and in light of the concerns expressed by multiple UF stakeholders across campus about the current model, a new model for the UF Core is proposed and presented in the following sections.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL AND ITS OUTCOMES

### THE BASIS FOR THE MODEL AND ITS ADDITIONAL GOALS

The basis for the proposed UF Core experience is to equip students with a meaningful and interconnected series of general education experiences that guide them toward self-knowledge and a better understanding of their place in the greater world. The new model combines in-class and out-of-class components. In part, this new model is proposed to alleviate burdens that the existing three-course model imposes on programs with already large total credit hour requirements. However, more importantly, this new model is

designed to accomplish the original desire to eliminate the unfocused general education experience of UF students by providing a shared experience that accomplishes the original seven goals of the UF Grand Challenges Core Program with the following additional provisions:

- Learning outcomes shared by all students,
- Interwoven content throughout the courses so that students understand the

objectives and the value of this shared experience,

- Demonstration of the relevance of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences to all academic disciplines outside of these areas,
- Core experiences (ideally taken in sequence) to allow students to build

upon their increasing knowledge of themselves, the world, and how they can best serve the world, and

- Engagement of students in meaning-making and purpose exploration in order for them to discover the major and career (i.e., vocation) best suited for their strengths and passions.

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the proposed UF Core. This Core consists of three experiences intended to be sequential (but not entirely necessary). First, all FTIC students will enroll in IUF1000, “What Is the Good Life?”, as this 3-credit-hour course currently serves the students. In the students’ second year, they will select one 3-credit-hour course from an offering of no more than a total of eight courses in *either* the Social Sciences or Natural Sciences category, making their decision based on their interests, likely guided by their intended choice of major. Subsequently, rounding out their UF Core experience, either during the summer between their second and third year or during their third year, all students will engage in some form of experiential learning, opting for 0-3 credit hours.

Throughout the core experience, students will be guided toward deeper meaning-making and purpose exploration. First, IUF1000 will encourage students to learn about themselves, who they are, their strengths and weaknesses, and how their values and beliefs are aligned with the greater world and with how others define and strive for a “good life.” Students will then thoughtfully select the second class from a list of no more than eight courses,

four in the Social Sciences category and four in the Natural Sciences category. Each course will introduce them to national and global issues they are likely to confront after graduation in the context of the course theme, whether it is the impacts of climate change, use of big data, or the damaging effects of natural events on communities in the world. Regardless of the second-year class selected, each student will learn how s/he might be able to contribute to the healing of the damage or possible harm associated with the focus of the class.

Finally, knowing who they are and having a better understanding of the world, students will then pursue the third experience in the UF Core, experiential learning, or getting out into the world to apply their strengths and solidify their choice of profession. While not required, the university will encourage this third experience for transfer students as well, providing an additional module with content from the first two experiences for preparation for their experiential learning project. Allowing transfer students to participate in the UF Core Program will provide them the anticipated enrichment of the program as well as a means of uniting with the entire campus in this purpose exploration effort.

A broad range of experiential learning opportunities will be available to students, including, but not limited to the following: study abroad, internships and co-ops, on- or off-campus research, community service, public service, interdisciplinary on-campus projects, and existing or new courses requiring experiential learning.

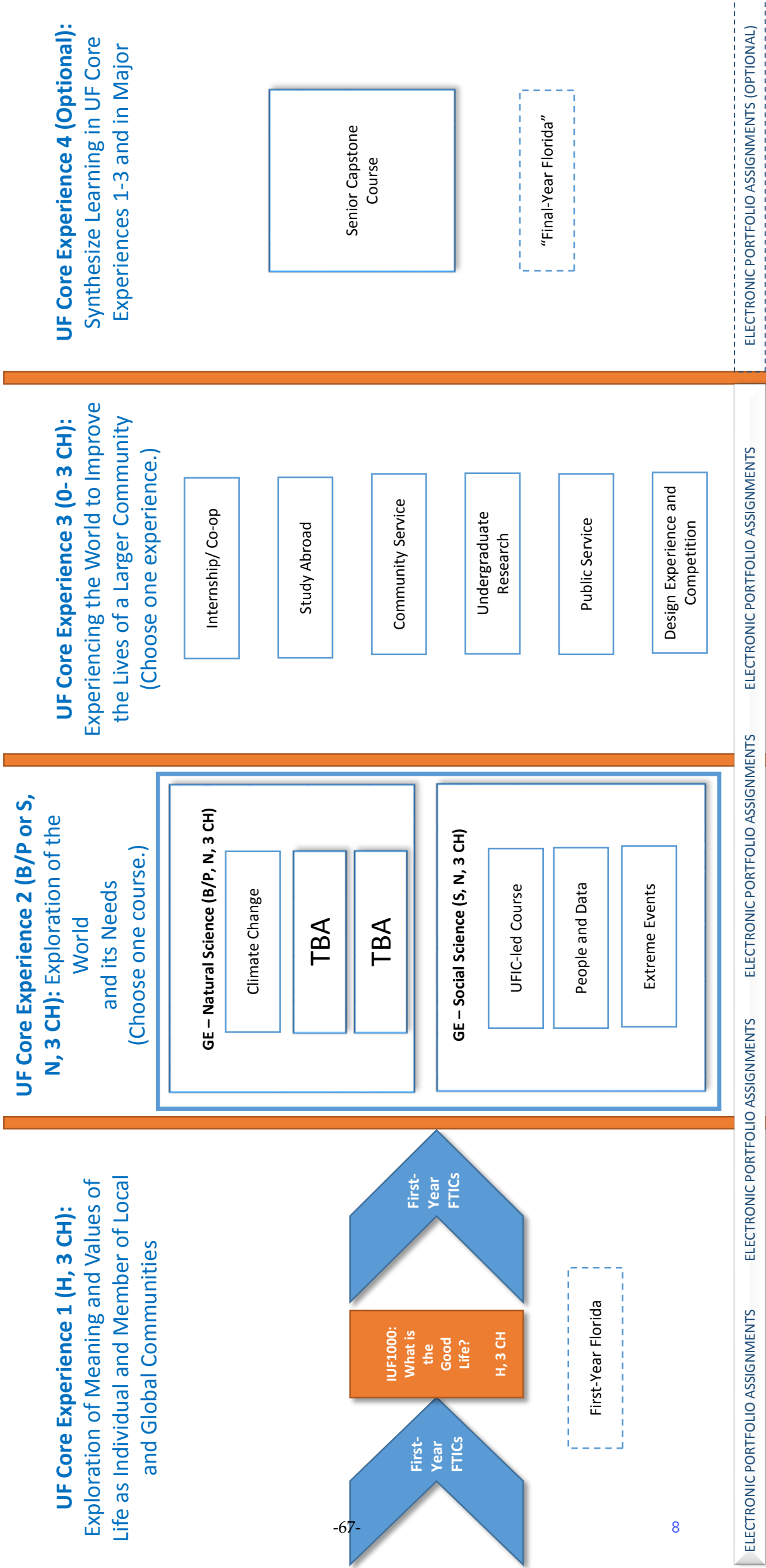
Throughout the three experiences, students will be required to maintain an e-portfolio (possibly through Canvas). Students will prepare assignments in their e-portfolios that will encourage their reflections and descriptions of their transformation in perceptions of themselves and the world throughout each stage of the Core experience. The e-portfolio component will ensure a seamless, honest, and personal self-examination and continual reexamination of what is important and what is not important in their ongoing search for meaning as they engage in learning inside and outside of the classroom. An added advantage of the e-portfolio component is provision of a built-in mechanism for assessing the individual courses and entire UF Core program.

As noted in Figure 1, two optional transitional experiences, First-Year Florida and “Final-Year Florida,” are recommended as complementary to the proposed core experiences. First-Year Florida is an existing one-credit-hour course that aims to transition students into the university,

acclimating her to the academic and social campus environment. Final-Year Florida is proposed for development in a partnership between colleges and UF CRC as a “bookend” to First-Year Florida. Final-Year Florida is envisioned to also be a one-credit-hour course, intended to transition students out into the world. Possible sections could separately target students who will enter graduate school, law or medical school, work in industry, government, or non-profit sectors, etc. Each section may offer specialized preparation for the individual groups of students in their majors, while also offering common content, such as money management. Both courses (First-Year Florida and Final-Year Florida) should be designed to echo the meaning-making and purpose exploration content of the core experiences and provide continuity for the student in this regard throughout their time at UF.

While more of a focus in previous generations and in smaller, religious colleges, most institutions of higher education today do not emphasize intentional, cohesive programs to encourage students to seek the meaning of their lives and their purpose in life. The following section provides a brief overview of the value of meaning-making programs to a modern public research university like the University of Florida.

Figure 1: Proposed Model for the UF Core Program



## CREATING PURPOSEFUL GRADUATES

*The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.*

–Pablo Picasso

As stated previously, two focal points threaded throughout this shared experience are meaning-making and purpose exploration. While the general education courses that provide the framework of this experience will have unique learning outcomes to match their individual overarching themes, they will share learning outcomes that will sustain the meaning-making and purpose exploration inquiry by the students.

The quote above attributed to Pablo Picasso summarizes the end goals of meaning-making and purpose exploration by students in the university. As Picasso was leading in his statement, the meaning of our life is the “why,” and the purpose of our life is the “how.” “Meaning,” states L. Marinoff (1999), “is how one understands one’s life on an on-going basis,” whereas purpose is the end to be attained. Meaning embraces interpretations, narrative frameworks, philosophical rationales and perspectives, and faith or belief systems that every one of us brings to the worlds in which we live, work, play, love, worship, and learn, and, according to many recent publications, no liberal education is complete without including the quest for meaning (e.g., Root, 2015).

At best, higher education institutions today encourage students to pursue purpose exploration in the form of career searching, typically in their final year of study. Indeed, purpose exploration is intended to pursue

goals, to reach resolutions, to seek results, and realize particular objectives and ends, such as a fulfilling job upon graduation as so well accomplished by our University of Florida Career Resource Center. However, as described by Nash and Murray (2010) in paraphrasing Kant, “purpose with no meaning is empty, and meaning with no purpose goes nowhere.” Universities and colleges typically encourage students to achieve a multitude of academic and career purposes without ever guiding them to create a structure of meaning that will inform their purposes. Echoing Viktor Frankl, psychotherapist and survivor of a Nazi concentration camp, the university void of meaning-making programs often aids students in discovering a “means to live” but no “meaning to live for” (Frankl, 1979).

Today, college campuses report an increasing and, in many cases, an overwhelming number of students suffering from anguish, anxiety, and other mental health problems (Scelfo, 2015; Wilson, 2015). “Meaninglessness” is most often reported by students in this condition. A recent Pew Research Center poll (2007) asked twenty-year-olds about their top goals in life. Eighty-one percent of the respondents stated that being rich was a top goal, whereas 51% desired fame. When college students are given liberty to search for meaning while learning towards a degree, they bind their core values (beliefs, connections, commitments, joys, and loves) within their course content, rather than separate from it (Yalom, 1980; Murray and Nash, 2010). These core values in turn provide them with a life-long

emollient for their anxieties, arming them with what is called “holy grit” (Clydesdale, 2015).

Inclusion of meaning-making and purpose exploration in the academic pursuit of knowledge, faculty and staff then become “meaning mentors” who have strong positive influence on the resiliency of students in success towards attainment of a degree and after. Institutions that have adopted meaning-making and purpose exploration on their campuses report a number of benefits for students, which include the following (Clydesdale 2015):

- Increased retention to degree,
- Higher confidence in choice of major,
- Heightened awareness of individual gifts,
- Greater global awareness and the needs of the world,
- Equally engaged mind and heart that leads to wholehearted dedication to a purpose, and
- Increased post-graduation resiliency to life’s challenges.

Another observation from campuses with meaning-making and purpose exploration activities is an increased sense of well-being among faculty and staff who deliver the content of these programs, born from the reconnection to the purposes that drew them to higher education in the first place.

Meaning-making and purpose exploration activities must make sense to each individual campus. Examples of meaning-making programs other institutions have developed for students include curriculum,

internships, service-learning, mentorships, living/learning communities, campus events, and more. Programs developed for faculty and staff include development workshops, reading groups, discussion groups, spirituality programs, religious diversity programs, progressive service activities, mini-grants, and more. Successful programs were intentional and deliberate in development, engaged entire campuses to consensus, were always developed with the student at the center, connected to existing institutionalized programs, incentivized engagement of the best teaching faculty, and incorporated effective public relations in marketing to all stakeholders (Clydesdale, 2015).

More specifically, examples of meaning-making and purpose exploration activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Recognizing the strong influence of the teacher on the student, the teacher can adopt pedagogical techniques that encourage students to take initiative in their deep-meaning learning inside and outside the classroom, on and off campus.

Examples of techniques are story-telling (instructors sharing their own story and guiding students to tell theirs); asking students open-ended, evocative, problem-based questions; leading students to understanding the practical implications of the course content in their everyday lives (personalized learning); allowing silence in lecture to give students time to grasp the course material and make it their own; etc.

- Small and large group conversations
- Colloquia sessions

- Service learning
- Internet chat rooms, discussion groups, blogs, etc.
- Meaning Mentor Program that partners students with faculty and staff guides

The envisioned UF Core Program will incorporate meaning-making and purpose exploration in each of the three components. The e-portfolio will serve as the uniting thread. Assignments requested of the students in the e-portfolio will engage them in reflection exercises and narrative writing within the context of their current stage of the program. Instructors,

teaching assistants, supervisors, peer mentors, and advisors will engage students in these exercises in their respective interactions with the students.

While the student must serve as the center of the envisioned UF Core Program, it must echo the mission of the university. All faculty, staff, and students engaged in the UF Core content must be confident that engagement in this program must resonate with the greater goals of the university. The next section presents the relevance of this envisioned UF Core Program to President Fuchs' Goal-Setting Task Force's Seven Goals for University of Florida.

## RELEVANCE TO THE PRESIDENT'S GOAL-SETTING TASK FORCE'S SEVEN GOALS

In his first year of service at the University of Florida, President Kent Fuchs launched a Goal-Setting Task Force to engage the campus in a broader conversation about the desired aspirations and goals for the university as it embraces its status of pre-eminence. The outcome of the year-long campus engagement is a list of seven goals with specific objectives and metrics (Appendix 7), guiding administrators, faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders to attain the University's overarching aspiration: *The University of Florida will be a premier university that the state, nation, and world look to for leadership.* The proposed UF Core Program goals are well aligned with UF's Seven Goals and is poised to assist the University in attaining these goals. The discussion below provides a description of how the objectives of the core program interweave with and enhance those of UF's Seven Goals.

**Goal 1: An exceptional academic environment that reflects the breadth of thought essential for preeminence, achieved by a community of students, faculty, and staff who have diverse experiences and backgrounds.**

Objective 1: UF students, faculty, and staff with increasingly diverse demographic and geographic characteristics.

Objective 2: A university climate that is inclusive, supportive and respectful to all.

Objective 3: Diverse, robust educational and interdisciplinary areas of excellence.

The UF Core Program engages Goal 1 and its objectives in the following ways:

- Creation of a unique academic environment that will nourish a sense of community in its universal approach of participation by administrators, faculty, staff, all students, and off-campus partners

- Requirement of all students to “get out into the world” to be sensitized to and bonded with the lives and needs of the “other” and to better understand how they fit in and can meaningfully contribute to the greater world.

**Goal 2: An outstanding and accessible education that prepares students for work, citizenship, and life.**

Objective 1: A high quality, widely recognized financially accessible undergraduate, graduate, and professional education and experience.

Objective 2: Services that are accessible and available in a timely fashion that support student health, development, and well-being, thereby improving their academic and personal growth and success.

Objective 3: Academic programs that promote effective and accessible learning through innovation.

Objective 4: High quality student-faculty interactions in mentored research.

The UF Core Program engages Goal 2 and its objectives in the following ways:

- A vision of a program accessible to all FTIC students
- Preparation of students for post-graduation by engaging them in purpose exploration and deeper meaning learning about themselves and off campus in the world
- Promise of increased retention of students by personalized activities that solidify their choice of major and by decreasing anxiety surrounding their feeling a lack of purpose in their education and their lives
- Promise of increased quality of instruction on campus by crystallizing a

core of instructors, emeritus faculty, student assistants who will serve as meaning mentors for students and a source of pedagogical expertise for the UF campus

- Establishment of a model for innovation in general education
- Meaningful faculty-student interaction through its basis of purpose exploration activities and experiential learning component

**Goal 3: Faculty recognized as preeminent by their students and peers.**

Objective 1: An increased number of faculty recognized by distinguished awards, fellowships, and memberships.

Objective 2: An increased number of high-impact scholarly publications and creative works.

Objective 3: An increased professional and public visibility of UF faculty.

Objective 4: An increased faculty participation in professional service and leadership.

Objective 5: A nurturing and invigorating academic and professional environment for all faculty across the research, teaching, and service missions of the university.

**Goal 4: Growth in research and scholarship that enhances fundamental knowledge and improves the lives of the world’s citizens.**

Objective 1: Documented advances in productivity and recognition of UF research programs.

Objective 2: Exceptional graduate and postdoctoral scholars who will contribute to influential research and scholarship.

Objective 3: Increased extramural and intramural funding that enhance both basic and translational research.

Objective 4: Processes and systems that facilitate excellence in research and scholarship.

The UF Core Program engages Goals 3 and 4 and their objectives in the following ways:

- Nourishment of a community of educational expertise among participating faculty, staff, and student assistants
- Increased knowledge of modern, effective pedagogical techniques not only among instructors but also graduate student assistants
- Increased research and scholarly activity in interdisciplinary areas of education, including ways to build purpose discovery into the curriculum, state-of-the-art methods in delivering effective general education programs, etc.

**Goal 5: A strengthened public engagement of the university's programs with local, national, and international communities.**

Objective 1: Increased engagement and outreach of UF programs leading to positive impacts in such areas as health, the economy, environment and community.

Objective 2: Improved communication leading to increase public awareness of and value placed on UF programs and their impact on society.

Objective 3: Increased technology translation and entrepreneurial activities.

The UF Core Program engages Goal 5 and its objectives in the following ways:

- Partnering with local organizations, including the government, religious, business, and non-profit sectors in not only the task force phase of program development but also in implementation and delivery of the program
- Provision of a means for the surrounding community to contribute positively to and gaining a sense of "ownership" of the educational experience of UF students

**Goal 6: Alumni who are successful in their careers and in life and who are proud to be graduates of the University of Florida**

Objective 1: Alumni who make significant contributions to their professions and society.

Objective 2: Alumni who engage with and support the University's educational, research, and service missions.

The UF Core Program engages Goal 6 and its objectives in the following ways:

- Provision of a life-long foundation of mechanisms for students to make meaning of their lives and understand their greater purpose in the world
- Creation of a strong bond among students with the "Gator Good" identity and to their roots at UF

**Goal 7: A physical infrastructure and efficient administration and support structure that enable preeminence.**

Objective 1: A campus with updated facilities, including modern research laboratories, classrooms to support state-of-the-art teaching and learning, contemporary residence halls, and high-quality technology infrastructure.

Objective 2: An efficient and effective administration that provides superior business services to the campus community, proactively streamlines processes to minimize burden and redundancy, incentivizes excellence through budget appropriations, and attracts and retains talented staff through ongoing professional development opportunities and competitive compensation.

Objective 3: An attractive, sustainable and safe campus that offers a high quality of life to faculty, staff, students, alumni and the community, making UF a desirable place to visit, live, work, and play.

The UF Core Program engages Goal 7 and its objectives in the following ways:

- Catalysis of innovative teaching and assessment techniques, including

assessing most effective teaching and learning environments

- Nourishment of the campus community through meaningful engagement of advisors, staff, faculty, and administrators in the education of students
- Encouragement of interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty through both teaching and education research

The University of Florida will take the time needed to ensure that the final form of UF Core Program will be the result of careful consensus-building on and off campus. The following section describes the envisioned process for building consensus and engendering ownership of this program among all administrators, faculty, staff, students, and off-campus partners.

## NEXT STEPS: ENSURING FEASIBILITY AND BUILDING CONSENSUS

Upon approval of this proposed model for the UF Core program, the next steps before finalizing the model are to:

- Ensure feasibility and engage campus in initial conversation,
- Establish task forces for program design,
- Engage campus in more in depth conversation to feed the work of the task forces, and
- Design and implement an organizational structure for sustained success.

To follow is a description of the fulfillment of the steps and anticipated timing for their completion.

### **Step 1: Ensuring Feasibility (*Spring 2016*)**

No program, regardless of how noble its objectives, will be successful if the framework of the university is not prepared to accommodate it. Therefore, the essential first step in developing this core program is to work with campus officials who will ultimately be charged with making the parts run smoothly and in unison, since these officials will articulate the concept of the shared experience to prospective and current students. For example,

collaborating with the Registrars' Office prior to finalizing a framework for the UF Core is critical to ensure ample sections and class locations are possible for the projected enrollments each semester. As mentioned previously, many undergraduate programs are highly constrained; therefore, early discussions with the administration and advisors in the relevant departments are critical to avoid interjecting credits that will ultimately result in students penalized for excess hours.

The following are individuals and groups with whom the Associate Provost and task force representatives will meet to discuss feasibility of the proposed framework of this program:

- *Individual Offices:*

These meetings will involve discussions relating to ensuring ample enrollment management in anticipated sections of classes, leveraging existing co-curricular programs, marketing the program to prospective students, evaluating best practices in tracking student participation in the experiential learning phase of the core program.

- Division of Enrollment Management, Office of Admissions
- Division of Student Affairs
- Registrar's Office
- UF Information Technology
- UF Libraries
- UF Preview Leadership from the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Advising Center

- *Existing UF Core Course Development and Implementation Teams:*

These meetings will introduce those involved in the existing core courses to the new framework, requiring each course to incorporate international (N) content for General Education Committee approval and to connect meaningfully to the other two experiences in the UF Core.

- Director of IUF1000, Dr. Andy Wolpert
- Climate Change, People and Data, Extreme Events Teams

- *Campus-wide Committees:*

- **Advising Council for Undergraduate Affairs** (Purpose: to request feedback and build consensus surrounding the new framework among the associate deans and other members)
- **Campus Multi-Faith Cooperative** (Purpose: to engage the students in ways in which the meaning-making exercises can tie into their respective beliefs and traditions)
- **Faculty Senate's Academic Policy Council** (Purpose: to give the Faculty Senate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed core model)
- **General Education Committee** (Purpose: to prepare this group of faculty to assist instructors in working in international (N) credit in the second year courses, to evaluate the overall general education experience this program provides, and to assess the courses and program)
- **Student Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs** (Purpose: to provide students the ability to offer

advice, feedback, and recommendations on the proposed core structure and to develop an undergraduate ambassador program to support students engaged in the UF Core experience)

- **University Advising Council (UAC)**  
(Purpose: to engage campus advisors at the early stage of program development to ensure advisor awareness and to identify critical roles of advising throughout this program)
- **UF Academic Assessment Committee**  
(Purpose: to develop an assessment plan for the individual components and entire program from the beginning of its development)
- **University Curriculum Committee**  
(Purpose: to receive comments on how each program will be impacted by the new framework and to prepare to evaluate and approve new courses in the UF Core)

○ *Meetings with Individuals in Colleges or Units:*

- College Deans
- Student Government President, Ms. Jocelyn Padron-Rasines
- UFIC, Dr. Leonardo Villalon, Dr. Matt Jacobs, Ms. Cindy Tarter
- UF CLS Director, Mr. Josh Funderburke
- UF CRC Director, Dr. Heather White
- UF Graham Center, Dr. David Colburn, Dr. Sheila Dickison
- UF Center for Undergraduate Research Director, Dr. Anne Donnelly
- Associate Provost for Distance Learning, Dr. W. Andy McCollough

- UF Online Director, Ms. Evangeline Cummings
- UF Director of Assessment, Dr. Tim Brophy

○ *Meetings with Off-Campus Stakeholders:*

- Selected Employers (per recommendation from UF CRC)
- Local Religious Organizations
- Local Non-profit and Community Service Organizations

**Step 2: Task Force Development and Initial Campus-wide Engagement (*starting in early Spring 2016 and continuing through program launch*)**

In parallel to the initial conversations in Step 1 and with early confidence that the proposed core framework is feasible and has ample campus energy surrounding the concept, Associate Provost Lindner will shape four task forces, composed of faculty, staff, and students, to design the details of and connect the first-, second-, and third-year experiences, respectively.

The ***First-Experience Core Task Force***, led by Dr. Andy Wolpert, will be charged with fully meshing the existing content of IUF1000 with the greater theme of the “meaning-making and purpose exploration.” Considered in this effort will be a possible name change of this course, while also adjusting course readings and reflections. As with each task force, this group will collaborate with the E-Portfolio Task Force to develop assignments for students to begin developing the habit of

self-reflection and discernment. Examples of initial questions to launch this Task Force's efforts include the following:

- How does IUF1000's existing course objectives mesh with the new vision of the UF Core Program? How can they be more clearly aligned?
- In what ways can instructors and student assistants enhance their skills in encouraging students to engage in their own learning and to explore their purpose in life?
- What roles can emeritus faculty play in serving as meaning mentors?
- How can course assignments be interwoven into the e-portfolio component?
- How will the course's student learning outcomes meaningfully connect to the other program components?
- How can the wisdom gained in delivering this class be transferred to their other components of the UF Core Program?

The ***Second-Experience Core Task Force***, composed of but not limited to faculty and staff who have developed and/or delivered the current Natural Sciences and Social Sciences core courses, will develop learning outcomes to be shared by all courses offered in the Natural Sciences or Social Sciences categories. This task force will also collaborate with the UF General Education Committee to successfully infuse international content to fulfill the UF international (N) requirement. Also, this group will assist the Associate Provost in selecting additional courses for development and inclusion in these

categories, and, as with other task forces, members of this task force will develop ideas for e-portfolio self-reflection assignments. Finally, this task force will ensure development of online sections of these courses with quality and learning outcomes equivalent to the on-campus sections. Initial questions for this Task Force to begin its work include the following:

- What are the common student learning outcomes shared by all classes in this stage of the program? How will these common outcomes connect meaningfully with the other components of the program?
- Should all the courses in this stage be listed in one broad category of a UF Core list, with some satisfying the B/P content and others, the S content?
- Should all courses not only including the N designation but also the D designation?
- What evaluation process should be used to determine future offering of a course in this program?
- Should UF launch another request for proposals for new courses?
- How can content be adjusted to satisfy the UF General Education International requirement?
- How can course assignments be interwoven into the e-portfolio component?
- How should students be guided to meaningfully select a course?
- In what ways can enrollment distribution among the course offerings be ensured?

The ***Third-Experience Core Task Force*** will be composed of both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs personnel to ensure successful collaboration among the various units that support experiential learning opportunities for students. This task force will assume the critical role of developing classes for public service, community service, internships/co-ops, and other activities that will provide students with 0-3 credit hours for their fulfillment of this third phase of the UF Core. This task force will also assist in striking a vision for the structure for successful implementation of this component of the UF Core and will also collaborate with the E-Portfolio Task Force. This Task Force will begin its work by addressing the following questions:

- What criteria need to be met for an activity to be eligible for this stage of the program?
- What best practices can be gleaned from UF and external programs that require experiential learning for credit (e.g., Pharmacy)?
- What is the best process for ensuring that students can register for 0-3 credit hours of any eligible experiential learning activity?
- How can students effectively connect with off campus opportunities for experiential learning?
- How can existing experiential learning efforts at UF be incorporated into this program?
- What minimum criteria would qualify an experience in this stage of UF Core?

- How can safety and liability concerns in requiring students to participate in experiential learning of this kind be minimized?
- How can e-portfolio assignments be interwoven into the experiential learning component of the program?
- Should a zero-credit-hour option be available to students?
- Should students be required two experiences “outside” the classroom?

Finally, the ***e-Portfolio Core Task Force*** will, in collaboration with the other three task forces, develop a platform for students to successfully complete the e—portfolio assignments that are interwoven into all three experiences. These task force members will learn effective methods for e-portfolio assessment and will take a strong role in selecting the platform to be used for this program. Cross-campus collaboration of this task force with not only the other task forces but also with the UF Registrar, UF IT, UF advisors, the UF Assessment Committee, and other groups is essential. Also, collaboration with off-campus partners is essential. This task force must engage local community organizations, employers, etc. in order to ensure development of reflection assignments meaningful and “personalized” for each student. Ultimately, this task force will provide a recommendation for the electronic platform (e.g., Canvas) that meshes with UF’s IT infrastructure. Initial questions that this task force must consider include the following:

- What are the best practices reported by other universities in effective e-portfolio use?
- Who at UF has effectively used e-portfolios in their courses and other learning platforms?
- How can the e-portfolio component be established to ensure smooth assessment of each individual experience and the entire program through SACS and other accreditation agencies?
- Should Composition credit be available to students in their writing e-portfolio assignments?
- What is the best choice of platforms for the e-portfolio component?

All of the task forces will be asked to provide guidance to UF Undergraduate Affairs in how to most effectively report to the UF campus and the broader community the impacts of the UF Core experience on students.

### **Step 3: Broader and Deeper Campus Engagement *(starting at the end of Spring 2016 and extending through Spring 2017)***

Once the task forces are assembled and in action, the Office of Undergraduate Affairs will collaborate with these teams to launch deeper conversations across campus in order to fully engage all stakeholders as the core experiences come to life. Avenues to engage students more deeply include the Student Advisory Council for Undergraduate Affairs, the Campus Multi-faith Cooperative, and UF Student Government. Faculty engagement will be catalyzed through the UF Faculty Senate and Deans and

Associate Deans. Continued conversations among staff and faculty advisors will engage these personnel more in depth in order to develop a necessary partnership prior to the UF Core launch.

Activities envisioned to spark deeper campus-wide conversations, especially among faculty, include common book reading (for an example, see Nash and Murray, 2010 and Clydesdale, 2015 as sample books), invited keynote speakers, town hall meetings, and surveys. The successful outcome of this step is a campus-wide knowledge of and commitment to the vision, value, and details of the UF Core program.

### **Step 4: Develop Resources to Ensure Sustainability of the UF Core *(starting in Spring 2016 and continuing through program launch)***

Through the filter of the campus conversations engaged in Steps 1-3 and in tandem with the efforts of the task forces, UF Office of Undergraduate Affairs will lead larger initiatives in developing resources that will institutionalize the UF Core program. Examples of such resources may include an undergraduate ambassador/teaching corps program, an emeritus faculty corps of meaning mentors, a marketing and media campaign to target prospective and current students, and funding support from grants from federal, state, and non-profit organizations and UF Foundation-led employer and individual donor prospects.

In addition, a critical necessity is development of a centralized process for the following desired outcomes:

- Communication among all instructors to provide common threads running through and connecting each experience and to share best practices,
- Consistently well-trained instructors, graduate TA's, and undergraduate assistants,
- Guarantee of a seamless operation of all experiences for a cohesive, meaningful experience for every student,

- Regular evaluation of each course and reporting of the status of the UF Core to on- and off-campus stakeholders.

Ultimately, for this effort to deploy successfully and be sustained over the long term, ample resources and overwhelming campus-wide engagement are necessary. While daunting at the onset, the hope of fulfillment of the vision of this program (to transform every UF student in their awareness of the value of general education in guiding them to find their life's purpose) and the promised increased student persistence should provide the university needed confidence to move forward in this important task.

## ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR UF CORE PROGRAM

Table 1 shows the timeline of anticipated activities leading up to the launch of the UF Core Program in its entirety. Because of the extensive campus engagement and consensus-building required to launch a successful program, the full launch of the program will be deferred from the Fall 2017 to the Fall 2018 incoming class. Piloting the full program will occur in the

Spring 2018 semester to allow adjustments and preparation for the following fall launch.

As described in the previous section, activities leading up to the full launch of the program will involve campus engagement efforts; design, course approvals, and piloting of the experiences by the task

Activity	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018
Associate Provost of the Office of Undergraduate Affairs (APOUA) collects information from numerous campus stakeholders.							
APOUA prepares proposed new UF Core framework.							
Pursue external sources of funding							
APOUA engages campus in initial conversations to ensure feasibility and receive feedback on proposed UF Core.							
APOUA deploys three Task Forces to begin developing each core experience.							
Task Forces engage within and among each other to finalize the UF Core framework.							
OUA engages campus in broader conversation about the UF Core.							
Call for proposals for new second-experience courses							
Completion of necessary course approvals							
Development of marketing campaign and media support							
Prepare UF Preview staff and campus advisors							
Pilot each experience							
Pilot the entire UF Core program							
Launch the UF Core program							

Table 1 Timeline for Development and Launch of the UF Core Program

forces and relevant campus committees; seeking external support of the program; establishing a process for communication among all stakeholders of the program; and development of a marketing and media effort that communicates the significance and value of this program to prospective

and current students. Successful implementation of the development phase of this program will result in distributed responsibilities for these milestones among various campus personnel, thus reflecting the necessary campus-wide engagement in the program.

## CONCLUSIONS: THE UF “MAKER’S MARK”

Given a strong campus-wide commitment towards pre-eminence and the commitment to achieving the seven goals put forward by President Fuchs’ Goal-Setting Task Force, University of Florida is at a time of unprecedented opportunity for enhancement of the experience and quality of life it offers undergraduate students. With its shared general education foundation infused with pillars of purpose exploration, international focus, and experiential learning, the proposed UF Core Program promises to distinguish all undergraduate students at the University of Florida. This three-part shared experience that includes UF International (N) general education credit resolves concerns of possible excess hours charges and no interconnectivity of the core experiences.

Development of this program will require deep engagement and conversation of administrators, faculty, staff and students, along with many off-campus partners. In the course of this two-year development effort focused on the themes of making meaning of life and exploring one’s purpose, this general education program

promises transformation and renewal of all participants as we together answer the very personal questions of “Why am I here?” and “How can my gifts contribute to fulfilling the needs of the world?” The successful outcome of this effort is that every participant in development and implementation and every on-campus and online FTIC student and transfer student who elects to participate will, through engagement in this program, have stronger sense of meaning in their lives and purpose in their life’s work. Students, through a combination of course work, practical experience, and encouraging mentorships, will have had exposure to the need of the world and introduction to providing practical means of resolving the problems of the world by wisely using their discovered gifts. When successfully launched, this core experience will truly provide a distinguishing “**UF Maker’s Mark**” on every graduate, leading them to successful vocations and to more strongly bonding them to the University and to their shared identity in effecting the **Gator Good** in this world.

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# **UF Quest Task Force Reports**

## **April 2017**



**UF QUEST**

**UNIVERSITY  
OF FLORIDA**

## **Final Report from Combined Working Group 1**

Andy Wolpert (Task Force Chair, Group 1)

Combined Working Group 1 recommends that the UF Core 1 requirement for general education in the humanities, which students presently complete through IUF 1000: What is the Good Life, be changed to include a set of “topics” courses, organized into five groups by their themes, so students can select courses according to their interests to satisfy the UF Core 1 requirement and faculty can develop courses according to their expertise. All UF Core 1 courses will examine essential questions in the humanities that extend beyond any one discipline. UF Core 1 courses will also share common objectives and student learning outcomes. A description of these changes, a Call for UF Core 1 Courses, and notes about the recommendations are provided in the attached documents.

- Essential Questions: Program Description and Call for UF Core 1 Courses
- Administrative Notes
- Steering Committee Notes
- Staffing and Financial Questions
- Questions, Comments, and Suggestions from Task Force 1

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

### **Description of the Program and Call for UF Core 1 Courses**

The goal of UF Core 1 is to provide unique courses that explore essential questions about the human condition from multiple perspectives in the humanities. In addition to introducing students to the humanities and fields of study that are often excluded from the high-school curriculum, UF Core 1 actively engages students in the search for knowledge so they can become responsible leaders in the production and transmission of knowledge. Because UF Core 1 examines essential questions that are the focus of scholarly research across the humanities, the content of a UF Core 1 course must not be limited to a single humanities discipline. Instruction extends beyond the boundaries of the traditional academic disciplines to inspire students to investigate essential questions in innovative ways by applying cross-disciplinary approaches. At the same time, UF Core 1 courses are firmly grounded in the academic rigor developed by the humanities disciplines that are the focus of these courses. Students are expected to create arguments and draw on evidence as appropriate for the fields of study in which instruction is provided and are assessed accordingly.

UF Core 1 consists of a range of courses, organized into five groups by their themes, so students can select courses according to their interests and faculty can develop courses according to their expertise. Students fulfill the UF Core 1 requirement by successfully completing any one of the UF Core 1 courses. Although the content of UF Core 1 courses will vary, they share the UF Core 1 objectives and learning outcomes, and they apply a distinct approach to the study of the humanities. Unlike other introductory courses, UF Core 1 courses do not provide a general survey of a discipline or topic. Instead they focus on essential questions that serve as the foundation for work in the humanities. Moreover, UF Core 1 courses will provide students with a signature academic experience through their use of cross-disciplinary approaches (as distinct from and complementary to the training provided to students in their majors), their examination of the essential questions of a UF Core 1 theme, and their development of common experiential activities intended to introduce students to the resources of the university outside of the classroom. Each UF Core 1 course will:

1. Cover content, methods, and/or theories across humanities disciplines.
2. Meet the objectives of the Humanities general education designation.
3. Use the UF Core 1 student learning outcomes as criteria for assessing student work.
4. Examine essential questions addressed in one of the five UF Core 1 themes:
  - a. The Examined Life
  - b. Identities
  - c. Justice and Power
  - d. Nature and Culture
  - e. War and Peace
5. Require students to participate in some of the common experiential activities designed by the faculty of UF Core 1 (e.g., tour of the Harn or the Florida Museum of Natural History, performance at the Constans Theatre or the Phillips Center, etc.).
6. Require a paper in which students provide reasoned answers to the essential questions of a UF Core 1 theme.

## UF Core 1 Essential Questions and Themes

What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? These kinds of questions are not easy to answer, but they are also not easy to ignore. They arise for anyone who pauses to consider just how she should see her place in the world and what she should do about it. They are *essential questions*.

Essential Questions introduces UF students to the humanities by examining those questions as they arise in a particular theme of inquiry. Unlike a general survey course in one of the humanities disciplines, a UF Core 1 course takes a specific theme as a special focus and uses it as a way to see how the humanities disciplines help in addressing essential questions. Themes include the topics of the examined life, personal and social identity, justice and power, nature and culture, and war and peace. Students in UF Core 1 explore one of these themes through a close examination of relevant works drawn from across the humanities, including architecture, art, design, music, literature, history, religion, and philosophy. Not every humanities discipline will be represented in a UF Core 1 course, but each course will incorporate, as appropriate, material from a variety of humanities disciplines.

The student who successfully completes UF Core 1 will appreciate the ways in which these questions about the human condition are not to be casually tossed aside as asking for mere “opinions.” Instead, he or she will be acquainted with some of the tools provided by the rich tradition of humanistic inquiry, tools that may be used to answer those questions to the best of one’s ability and live a life guided by informed reflection on these essential questions.

UF Core 1 courses are organized into five groups by their themes. Each theme is designated below with a name, some key essential questions, and a brief description.

### (1) The Examined Life

*Questions.* What makes life worth living? How do we or should we examine a life? What is valuable in life?

An examination of the ways in which individuals and cultures have thought about what makes a life worth living, how those thoughts might reflect and shape the experiences of those who produce them, and how one might aim to develop a critically informed view of the examined life. Topics may include the study of autobiography, representations of heroes or moral exemplars, the expression of passions in artistic works or performances, the codification of cultural values in myth, ways in which religious and/or cultural traditions seek to foster lives of value, fears of meaningless or futile lives, and the impact of luck on the quality of life.

### (2) Identities

*Questions.* How are personal and social identities constructed? How and why do they change? In what ways are such identities personally, socially, or politically significant?

An examination of how people shape their identities and are identified as belonging to various groups. Topics may include the ways in which identities shift with age, position, time, place, and sociopolitical categories (e.g., gender, class, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation); the formation of identities at intrapersonal, interpersonal, and systematic levels; historical and contemporary

transformations of identities; how self-fashioning, portraits, and the built environment construct identities; how past societies understood the configuration of identity; the role of identities in politics and activism; and how identities may matter in sustaining or changing relations of power or influence.

### **(3) Justice and Power**

*Questions.* What is justice? How are just societies created and maintained? How are the uses and abuses of power connected with justice and injustice?

An examination of the roles of justice and power in shaping communities with an emphasis on how power can promote justice or injustice. Topics may include theories of the nature of justice or power, how conflicting views of justice and/or power have played out in society, the dynamics of power and justice in either contemporary or historical events, personal, social, and cultural reactions to injustice, and ways power might be transformed for just ends.

### **(4) Nature and Culture**

*Questions.* Who are we in relation to the natural world? How have humans understood their role in the natural world and their responsibility to it? How do portrayals of nature reflect our values or self-understanding?

An examination of the ways in which humans see themselves and their place in the natural world. Topics may include conceptions of nature; how representations of the natural world have been used to express important values; humans in contrast to animals; human interventions in the landscape and the values that guide such designs; development, sustainability, and conservation; ideas about humanity's place in relationship to paradise, divine creation, or sacred dimensions of the natural world; and nature as a site for physically or spiritually healthy or harmful experiences.

### **(5) War and Peace**

*Questions.* What is the nature of human conflict, whether it is physical or confined to words and ideas? How can communities manage, resolve, and remember conflicts?

An examination of political, social, or cultural conflicts at the local, subnational, national, or international level. Topics may include what causes conflicts; how conflicts evolve; how conflicts are represented, conceptualized, and remembered; what ethical questions arise during conflicts; how people seek to mitigate conflicts, resolve them, and promote dialogue; and how communities cope with the aftermath of conflicts.

## **UF Core 1 Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

### **Objectives**

UF Core 1 provides instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, theory and methodologies used across humanities disciplines to examine essential questions as addressed in a particular UF Core 1 theme. Students will learn to identify and analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought on those questions from across the relevant humanities disciplines. UF

Core 1 emphasizes clear and effective analysis of issues and problems from multiple perspectives in the humanities.

### Learning Outcomes

1. Content: Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used across humanities disciplines to understand essential questions addressed in a particular UF Core 1 theme.
2. Critical Thinking: Analyze and evaluate answers to essential questions addressed in a particular UF Core 1 theme by using established resources drawn from humanities disciplines.
3. Communication: Communicate clearly and effectively answers to essential questions addressed in a particular UF Core 1 theme in written and oral forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines.

### UF Core 1 Course Proposals

The Office of the Provost invites faculty of undergraduate-degree-granting colleges to submit proposals for UF Core 1 courses. Proposals do not need to include a complete syllabus, but they must include the following information:

1. *The relevant UF Core 1 theme and a specific title.* Since the courses are designated as topics courses, these titles (or shortened versions thereof) will appear in the schedule of courses for students to consult. Indicate under which UF Core 1 theme your course will be taught and provide a title for the course.
2. *A narrative description of the course aimed at exciting student interest.* Such descriptions, if approved, will appear on a website describing the available UF Core 1 course options for students to consult. Relevant section numbers in the course schedule will be linked to these descriptions.
3. *Specific course objectives.* These should be aligned both with the Humanities general education objectives and the UF Core 1 course objectives and student learning outcomes.
4. *Disciplines to be covered by the course.* Specify the disciplines and describe how the course includes them for the UF Core 1 theme it explores.
5. *Course content.* Required texts or readings and a weekly course schedule of topics to be covered.
6. *Assignments (homework, quizzes, tests, papers) to be included.* Assignments must include a paper in which students provide reasoned answers to some essential questions addressed in the course. Although the proposals should take into account that all UF Core 1 courses will include some common experiential activities, the actual assignments associated with these activities will be determined at a later date.
7. *Methods of grading.* Indicate how much each assignment is worth in determining the course grade and what sort of grading scheme is to be used. Indicate if the tests will be done online or in a face-to-face environment.
8. *Course structure.* Indicate whether the course is a large lecture with small discussion sections, 100% online with no discussion sections, or a hybrid with 50% online and 50% face-to-face instruction. Will the course be taught using any innovative pedagogy or technology? What is the course's capacity?
9. *Teaching Assistant support.* Indicate the number of TAs needed to teach the course, the departments and schools which may provide TAs for your course, and any preferences

regarding their background, knowledge, or prior teaching experience. Explain what training you will provide to ensure consistency of course delivery, especially if you will be working with TAs from multiple units.

10. *Three-year plan*. Include a plan (developed in consultation with your chair or director) to teach the course at least once a year for at least three years, whether by the same or different faculty.

**Deadline:** Completed proposals must be received by **DATE**. Please submit all proposals by email to **NAME** in the Office of Undergraduate Affairs at **EMAIL ADDRESS**.

Please call Dr. Angela Lindner at 352-846-1761 for additional information.

## **Administrative Notes**

Presently the Good Life program uses a single course number (IUF 1000) because only one course fulfills the UF Core requirement. Combined Working Group 1 recommends that five distinct “topics” course numbers be introduced, one for each of the five themes that are the focus of UF Core 1 and can be used to fulfill the Year 1 requirement. The Call for Course Proposals provides a relatively brief description of each of the five themes for use by potential instructors, but for the catalog, descriptions are limited to 50 words. A proposed 50-word catalog description is provided for each course below.

### **IUF 1010 THE EXAMINED LIFE**

An introduction to the humanities organized around questions about the examination of values in life. What makes life worth living? How can we or should we examine a life? What is valuable in life? Materials and approaches are drawn from a variety of humanities disciplines. Specific topics vary by instructor. [50]

### **IUF 1020 IDENTITIES**

An introduction to the humanities organized around questions about identities. How are people identified—by themselves or others—as belonging to groups? How do such identities change? How do they matter personally or politically? Materials and approaches are drawn from a variety of humanities disciplines. Specific topics vary by instructor. [50]

### **IUF 1030 JUSTICE AND POWER**

An introduction to the humanities organized around questions about justice and power. What is justice? How are just societies created and maintained? What is the role of power in bringing about justice or injustice? Materials and approaches are drawn from a variety of humanities disciplines. Specific topics vary by instructor. [48]

### **IUF 1040 NATURE AND CULTURE**

An introduction to the humanities organized around questions about nature and culture. Who are we in relation to the natural world? How do—or should—our portrayals of nature reflect our values and self-understanding? Materials and approaches are drawn from a variety of humanities disciplines. Specific topics vary by instructor. [50]

### **IUF 1050 WAR AND PEACE**

An introduction to the humanities organized around questions about human conflict, including both physical and cultural clashes. What causes conflict within or between groups? How can—or should—communities manage, resolve, and remember conflicts? Materials and approaches are drawn from a variety of humanities disciplines. Specific topics vary by instructor. [50]

Because these are “topics” courses, a customized title will appear in the Schedule of Courses to reflect the focus of the individual sections. The Call for Courses should, therefore, be understood as a call for specific courses for any of these five topics. For example, one faculty member may propose to develop a course under the topic of “Nature and Culture” that examines the views of nature and technology reflected in the art and literature from the period of the scientific revolution. Another faculty member may choose to develop a course on technology in science fiction, which will also fall

under the “Nature and Culture” theme. The two courses would appear on the Schedule of Courses as follows:

Course	Section	Title
IUF 1040	1234	ART MACHINE & NATURE
IUF 1040	1235	TECH IN SCIENCE FICTION

When students register, they will be able to easily distinguish the content of the various sections from their titles as they appear in the online Schedule of Courses and from the links to the syllabi that will be provided in Textbook Adoption. The steering committee should maintain a website that includes not just general information about the UF Core 1 program but also information on all active and recently approved courses. In addition, the website should include course descriptions for each topic, and links to such information should be provided in Textbook Adoption, so student can access this information through the Schedule of Courses. Such information will make it easier for students to identify a UF Core 1 course that interests them and should help them get excited about the range of UF Core 1 courses available to them.

## **Steering Committee Notes**

**Combined Working Group 1 recommends that UF Core 1 courses be administered by a steering committee charged with the following tasks:**

- Administration of UF Core 1 courses
- Proposal solicitation, review, and approval
- Evaluation of courses in progress
- Engaging past and current instructors

The current steering committee already incorporates the first task, which is hardly a small one. Given the proposed program, the solicitation, review and approval of new proposals would become a regular task of the committee as well—which makes it more burdensome, a point that needs to be recognized. Notes on the various tasks are included below.

### ***Call for Courses***

A call should be sent out to the faculty, inviting them to submit a proposal for a course that explores the essential questions of one of the five themes. A proposal should be accompanied by a plan for teaching that course, or a course with significant continuity of content, at least once a year for at least three years. At the end of that three years, the course could be re-proposed, perhaps with significant revisions in light of feedback, and perhaps provided to other faculty or units who wish to use that same course (though this may require approval of the originating faculty/unit, since by developing it they should gain some degree of authority over how it is taught, at least given that it is approved by the steering committee).

With a three-year plan, a significant amount of stability is introduced into the program for the purposes of planning out the staff and TA resources.

### ***Review and approval***

The present proposal provides faculty with significant freedom to develop courses that fit into the various UF Core 1 themes. As a result, it is important that the steering committee exercise oversight to ensure that any approved course fits the theme and meets the expectations of an Essential Questions course. The description of the program and its themes with the call for proposals should serve as a touchstone for evaluating proposals, but it may be worth highlighting here a few key points about evaluating proposals.

Successful proposals must describe a course such that:

- The materials fit the designated theme
- The requirements fit the designated student learning outcomes
- The course material is not a survey and is plausibly set up in a way to excite students' interest
- The course material must be accessible to first-year students from a wide variety of backgrounds, so it must not presuppose much background knowledge

- At the same time, the tasks required of students should be challenging in a way that requires students to put forth significant effort in thinking about these questions, so that they are “pushed” without being intimidated
- While disciplinary expertise should be used to deepen the course, it should not be equivalent or near-equivalent to any standard course squarely in the relevant discipline
- Cross-disciplinary material and approaches should be incorporated in some robust fashion, not as a token add-on to the course but as something integrated with other material. (This must be judged on a case-by-case basis; no specific percentage of extra-disciplinary content should be mandated.)
- While proposals can indicate a preference for TA assistance from certain disciplines, given that it is hard to predict what resources will be available, the proposal must be such that a TA from a different humanities discipline can plausibly do a good job with the course as proposed, perhaps seeing it as a “learning for herself” job where she also uses her other skills to engage the students
- The course must include at least one paper in which the students must provide reasoned answers to one of the questions made central in the course
- The course must require students to participate in some experience outside the classroom that exposes students to cultural resources at UF, such as museums and theaters, where those experiences are drawn from a list made available by the steering committee.

### ***Evaluation of courses in progress***

The steering committee should institute some standing procedure for getting feedback on the courses in progress that goes beyond the standardized course evaluations available to all UF students, perhaps with its own Qualtrics survey or instructors’ self-evaluations or the like. Given the difficulty of making this kind of special program succeed with students, both experimentation and review should be encouraged in a collaborative fashion.

### ***Engaging past and current instructors***

Faculty who have served as instructors for the Good Life course are valuable resources for the ongoing development of the Essential Questions program. Once the program is underway, those who have been instructors for an Essential Questions course will also be valuable resources. The steering committee should engage past and current instructors in various ways. Such instructors could be on the steering committee itself or perhaps serve as ad hoc reviewers for proposals; they might play a role in evaluating courses in progress or in helping advertise the program to other faculty so as to improve faculty participation. In any case, the steering committee should incorporate those faculty on a regular basis to take advantage of their experience.

## Staffing and Financial Questions

Combined Working Group 1 was also charged with exploring the “unintended consequences” of UF Quest and its impact on the participating colleges and units. Without detailed information on funding available for the UF Quest, it was difficult to identify “unintended consequences.” Instead, Combined Working Group 1 raised a series of interrelated questions about the staffing and funding of UF Quest courses.

**Faculty Capacity:** How will faculty capacity be increased to meet the needs of UF Quest without compromising rigor in research, service, and other teaching?

- UF Quest courses will require faculty capacity *on top of* regular curricular needs and therefore require commensurate faculty hires.
  - Current curricular needs for majors/minors must continue to be met while some faculty capacity is redirected from these curricular needs to the new UF Quest courses. In this way, the UF Quest model differs from the current Gen Ed model in that Gen Ed classes generally serve the missions of the specific programs and units that offer them. UF Quest courses will not, and therefore they require additional faculty capacity.
  - An in-load model requires a portion of faculty assignment and effort be dedicated to UF Quest. This may be a non-starter (or a significant disincentive) for many units which believe that they cannot redirect faculty time to UF Quest courses without jeopardizing their own academic programs. Thus, to make the in-load model viable, units would need additional faculty to teach UF Quest courses and maintain the current rigor of their own academic programs.
  - An out-of-load model allows units to keep the current level of faculty capacity directed at units’ curricular needs, and adds UF Quest teaching for extra remuneration. This model reduces faculty time and effort available to dedicate to research and service, other important pillars of our institutional mission. This model is essentially an increase in teaching load (and pay) that reduces time and effort available to ensuring teaching rigor in UF Quest and in major/minor curricula, and in research and service assignments.
  - A model in which most UF Core 1 courses are taught by adjuncts raises concerns about maintaining the continuity and quality of these courses. How will they be signature UF experiences if taught primarily by contingent faculty?
- Combined Working Group 1 believes that an out-of-load model, contingent faculty model, or an in-load model *at current faculty capacity* are not sustainable or aligned with UF’s commitment to rigor in teaching, research, and service. It therefore recommends that rigor in the three-pillar mission of UF is served best by new tenure-track faculty hires to meet the additional faculty capacity required by UF Quest.

**SCH accounting and crediting:** How will units' generation of SCHs in UF Quest courses be accounted and credited to the unit?

- Although UF has moved beyond the RCM model, many budgetary and non-budgetary appraisals and decisions about units (e.g., need for faculty hires, OPS dollars, TA support) still incorporate SCH generation as a factor.
- How will the individual units be credited for the SCHs generated by their faculty and TAs from UF Core 1 courses?

**Faculty participation:** How will faculty participation be encouraged and recognized to ensure high quality and rigor?

- UF Quest courses require faculty to think, teach, and coordinate in innovative and cross-disciplinary ways. What incentives will be provided to encourage faculty and units to participate in the development of UF Core 1 courses?
- Will course development stipends be offered to encourage faculty to develop UF Core 1 courses? If so, can they be designed in such a way to encourage faculty to commit to teaching UF Core 1 courses for a three-year period?

**TA support:** How will TA allocation, preparation, and rigor be managed?

- IUF 1000 has generated a consistent number of TAs for CLAS, COTA, and DCP over the past five years. Will the level of TA support across the participating colleges, departments, and schools remain the same once there are multiple course offerings for the first year of UF Quest?
- Will the need to ensure parity in TA support reduce the number of course options that students have to complete the UF Core 1 course requirement?
- Will the need to ensure that students have sufficient options result in a reduction of TA support currently provided to some of the participating departments and schools and an increase of TA support to other departments and schools?

**Class Size:** Combined Working Group 1 discussed a variety of options for course delivery (100% face-to-face, hybrid, and online). There was general agreement that the size of combined lecture sections should average at no more than 150 students, with break-out sessions led by TAs. Members also recommended that faculty should have the option to teach UF Core 1 courses with as few as 50 or 60 students.

### Comments from Task Force 1

On Tuesday, March 28, Task Force 1 convened to discuss the proposals of Combined Working Group 1. The following members were present: Sophia Acord, Joel Brendemuhl, Ryan Duffy, Kris Klan, Mark Law, Brenda Smith, Mary Watt, Andrew Wolpert, Kathy Zemba, and Gene Witmer (Co-Chair of Combined Working Group 1).

The following comments, questions, and suggestions were raised at the meeting.

- (1) How will faculty be encouraged to develop UF Core 1 courses? It was recommended that workshops be developed to help faculty learn more about the purpose of UF Core 1 and to answer any questions that they may have about the course proposal process. It was also suggested that multiple teaching options should be available to faculty (e.g., in-load, overload, team-teaching, course replacement support for units, course-development stipends, post-doctoral fellowships, etc.) so more faculty can participate in the UF Core 1 program.
- (2) Will faculty need to pilot new courses before they fulfill the UF Core 1 requirement? How will the UF Core program determine when new courses are fully developed and ready to be part of the program?
- (3) What will be done to incentivize faculty to teach UF Core 1 courses more than once? Although course-developed stipends are generally successful in encouraging faculty to develop new courses, faculty often stop teaching these courses after they have taught them once and the course-developed stipend has been spent. How will the UF Core program avoid this problem? Perhaps course-develop stipends could be “time released” over a period of three years to cover not only development, but also assessment, and course changes.
- (4) How will the UF Core program ensure that a sufficient number of Core 1 courses is offered each semester so students have a real choice? Will the program be able to offer multiple course options at the same time? If not, students may still be forced to select courses based on their schedule rather than the topics of the individual courses.
- (5) What will the UF Core program do to ensure that course proposals meet the requirements of the program and there is consistency across the sections? The concern was raised that some faculty may propose courses that align with UF Core 1 objectives and outcomes, but they may teach their courses in very discipline-specific ways. How will the UF Core program ensure that the Core 1 courses meet the objectives of Year 1?
- (6) Will UF Core 1 entertain course proposals that do not fit within one of the five proposed themes? Will the program be open to additional themes?
- (7) How will UF Core 1 evaluate the success of the program? Will the program rely solely on internal (and student) evaluations, or will it consider using an external evaluation service?
- (8) It was suggested that a society of UF Core teaching fellows be established to help mentor faculty.

- (9) It was suggested that a formal mentoring process be established for TAs.
- (10) Concern was raised that insufficient consideration has been given to the logistical problems posed by the proposed changes to the UF Core program. Although IUF 1000 presently has sufficient classroom space, the situation will change dramatically if some combined lecture sections will be capped at 150 (or lower) instead of 300. Moreover, there will be additional pressure on classroom space from Year 2 courses, which will also need to find classrooms for their sections. It seems unlikely that there are sufficient classrooms to handle 3,000 more seats per semester.

## **Final Report from Combined Working Group 2**

Dr. David Miller (Task Force Chair, Group 2)

The (Provost / UF Quest Working Group/ Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs) invites course proposals that would become part of the UF Quest Year 2 Program for First Time in College students, beginning Fall 2019. As a shared experience, selected courses must include the development of a semester project and its presentation to an audience beyond the classroom.

Courses should present subject matter relevant to society today, and demonstrate the kinds of questions that are asked and answered by natural and/or social scientists. Classes should reflect faculty expertise, as well as instructor commitment to inspired teaching, either in traditional classroom settings or in alternative settings that enrich student learning.

Courses may be proposed by Departments, Schools, Colleges, or as interdisciplinary collaborations. These courses may be new or adaptations of existing courses. Courses must meet the requirements for either “P” (Physical Science), “B” (Biological Science), or “S” (Social Science) General Education designation. In all selected courses, the following additional student learning outcomes (SLOs) must be integrated into the course:

**At the completion of the course, students will:**

- **describe and explain the cross-disciplinary aspects of a pressing societal problem or challenge;**
- **propose and critically analyze an approach, policy, or action (grounded in theories, methodologies, and data) that addresses some aspect of a pressing societal problem or challenge; and**
- **present the proposed approach, policy, or action addressing the pressing societal problem or challenge at a general audience level.**

The course will culminate with the presentation of the project developed throughout the semester that is based on the SLOs. This presentation could take one of several forms (e.g., poster, video, voiceover Powerpoint, debate). We recommend that the projects include all or several of the following:

- Collaborative work in small groups
- Collaboration across courses
- Presentation at a Provost-organized symposium or in an online forum
- Incorporation into the UFQUEST e-portfolios

The symposium and online forum would be organized through the Provost’s office. Multiple symposia sessions could be conducted, with approximately 150 presentations in each session (3-5 sessions per day, perhaps during the last week of classes). Best poster/presentations will be selected, perhaps by a peer jury system, and recognized with awards.

**Additional recommendations:****1. Number of courses**

The strength of this program will depend on the variety of courses approved. We recommend that the number of courses should be at a scale that will promote student choice and widespread participation of faculty from units engaged in undergraduate education. A large number of courses will also provide the opportunity to maintain a balance between the different Gen Ed categories (B, P, or S).

**2. Process of course selection**

We recommend the creation of a standing committee to select the courses based on proposals' compliance with SLOs and course requirements as described in the call for course proposals and will include relevance, quality and rigor. This standing university committee (appointed by the Provost's office) will evaluate present and future year 2 UFQuest course proposals. This committee, the UFQuest Course Committee (QCC), will meet as needed, but at least once per semester, to handle all UFQuest year 2 course issues. UF's student advising services and student representatives should be represented on the QCC. The QCC will also be charged with periodic evaluation of active year-2 UFQuest courses and will consider, student evaluations and learning outcomes.

**3. N or D designation**

We recommend UF a Quest year 2 courses not be allowed to carry with them an N or D designation. Due to the high number of requirements that must be met with the existing criteria (Year 2 requirements as well as B, P or S), adding in an international or diversity component would be challenging, and would likely compromise the rigor of the course in one of those areas. It would also have the unwanted effect of having students gravitate toward the courses carrying multiple designations in order to meet requirements quickly.

## Final Report from Combined Working Group 3

Dr. Chris Hass (Task Force Chair, Group 3)

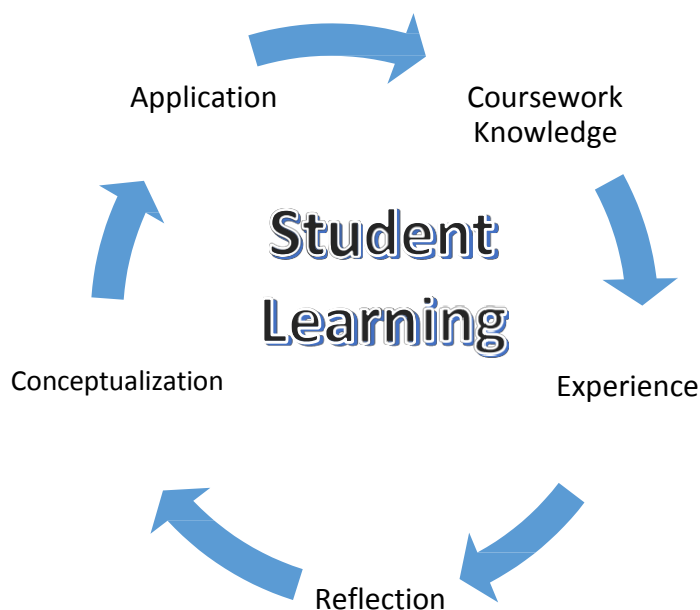
### Experiential Learning

#### 1. Purpose of the Experiential Learning Requirement

As reported in the 2015 EAB forum summary, there is growing evidence that employers believe recent graduates are underprepared to apply knowledge gained at the institution to “real-world” experiences and to reflect meaningfully on these efforts as part of their professional development process. The overall purpose of experiential learning at UF is to ensure students engage in specific, real-world activities that facilitate their personal and professional development.

#### 2. Definition of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is the application of principles, skills, and conceptual understanding within a real-world context that leads to personal and professional growth.



#### 3. Proposed Experiential Learning Policy

The Experiential Learning requirement will ensure Colleges deliver guided development of practical experience in one of five broad areas: Design, Community Based Learning, Study Abroad, Internship-Practicum Experience, or Undergraduate Research.

Effective Fall 2019, the University will require all undergraduate degree granting colleges to provide experiential learning opportunities for their students. Henceforth, this will be referred to as the E requirement. Further, academic units will provide space within the 8-semester plan for students to participate in for-credit experiential learning activities without affecting the total

number of credits required for the degree. Recognizing the diversity of academic programs across the university, the E requirement may be met in a variety of ways, including both credit and noncredit options. However, credit options must be available. Units may choose to incorporate experiential learning courses into major degree requirements or elsewhere in the 8-semester plan.

Experiential Learning courses will be designated within the curriculum inventory with an “E” code.

Colleges will propose activities students in their majors may use to fulfill the E requirement (refer to College Implementation Plan below). Many programs already provide and/or require experiences that meet the E requirement student learning outcomes (SLOs) proposed below. Such experiences, once certified through the GE Committee, would meet the requirement without modification to the student’s academic program and would automatically be tracked as part of the student’s audit (see below).

The E requirement will be implemented in Fall 2019, by which time all individual college plans should have been approved by the GE Committee. Prior to this date, the Experiential Learning Taskforce will work with each college to identify existing courses or extracurricular activities within individual major programs that would already meet the E requirement or that could meet the requirement with minor modification. The Taskforce will also work with the other major programs to develop opportunities for students to meet the E requirement either within the program or by collaboration with other campus units. Colleges that will include non-credit options for the E requirement must ensure that these options can meet the proposed E requirement SLOs and include at least 45 hours of engagement. After implementation of the E requirement, each college will be responsible for monitoring its courses and extracurricular activities for compliance to the E requirement SLOs. The Office of Undergraduate Affairs will provide assistance as needed.

#### **4. Student Learning Outcomes for Experiential Learning**

Courses or extracurricular activities that fulfill the E requirement should be structured or coordinated with a student’s program curriculum. Approved activities fall into one of five broad areas (each with its own SLOs):

##### **Design**

Students design or create an original system, component, form or work that meets the desired needs within reasonable parameters and constraints of the discipline or profession.

- **Content:** Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories, and methodologies relevant to the design process.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the design experience.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions relevant to the design experience.

Students explore the significance of their design experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion.

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and discipline.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and describe how they were addressed.
- Students identify, describe, and explain the connection between the discipline or course content and the design or creative activity.  
Students describe and explain how the design experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

### **Community Based Learning**

Students identify issues and needs within the community and develop strategies and/or programs through collaboration with community partners.

- Content: Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories and methodologies appropriate to the experience.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the experience.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems facing the community.

Students explore the significance of their service learning experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion.

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and their place within the larger community.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and social issues that emerged and explain how they may utilize their abilities to address issues within the community.
- Students identify and explain the connection between the discipline or course content and the service activity.
- Students describe and explain how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

### **Study Abroad**

Students engage in academic inquiry while interacting effectively with members of other cultures.

- Content: Students identify, describe, and explain relevant course content in the context of global and intercultural conditions and interdependencies.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze and interpret global and intercultural issues.
- Communication: Students communicate effectively with members of other cultures or about their cultural experiences.
- Diversity/International: Students develop and convey cultural self-awareness, appreciation of and cultural sensitivity to diverse populations.

Students explore the significance of their study abroad experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion.

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and host culture.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and describe and explain how they were addressed.
- Students describe and explain how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

### **Internship-Practicum**

Students integrate classroom knowledge, skills, and methods with professional roles, responsibilities, and activities in a supervised setting.

- Content: Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories, and methodologies appropriate to the experience.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the experience.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems encountered within the experience.

Students explore the significance of their internship/practicum experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion.

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and understanding of the internship area.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and describe and explain how they were addressed.
- Students identify and connect the knowledge and/or skills gained in their coursework to their internship/practicum observations and experiences.
- Students describe and explain how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

### **Undergraduate Research**

Students make an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline

- Content: Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories and methodologies appropriate to the discipline.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the discipline.
- Critical Thinking: Students formulate empirically-testable hypotheses derived from the discipline of study and/or apply formal and informal qualitative and/or quantitative analysis effectively to examine discipline specific phenomena.

Students explore the significance of their undergraduate research experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion.

- Students explain how the experience informed their sense of self and discipline.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and how they were addressed.
- Students explain the connection between the discipline or course content and the research activity.
- Students explain and describe how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

Sample syllabus verbiage, assignment and rubrics for each category are provided in Appendix 1. Successful completion of an E experience requires a minimum grade of C or S.

## **5. Process for College Implementation Plans**

- A. Each college will be asked to provide a detailed explanation of the college certification process and to identify an Experiential Learning Certification Officer.
- B. Credit-based courses will automatically be tracked within student information systems, whereas non-course activities may require placement and grading of a “milestone” that will be picked up by the system. When extracurricular activities are used to provide experiential learning, students must submit an Experiential Learning Plan to the appropriate college/major reviewer as outlined in the college certification process for approval prior to beginning the experience. This review will verify that the proposed experience is designed to allow fulfillment of the required SLOs. Upon completion of the experience, students will be required to submit a written assignment that must then be reviewed by the designated faculty supervisor for grading and by the Experiential Learning Certification Officer to approve the experience as having fulfilled the E SLO’s.
- C. E courses will be coded and treated in a similar manner as courses with H, N, D, P/B, or S. Newly developed courses will be entered into the approval process and will be reviewed by the college curriculum committee, then the UCC, and then the GE Committee. Existing courses requesting the E designation will be reviewed by the college curriculum committee and then the GE Committee. The UCC and the GE Committee will review existing courses undergoing substantive changes to meet the E requirement SLOs. The task force recommends that individuals with expertise in experiential learning be included on the GE committee.
- D. Using the SLOs outlined above, each college shall submit an implementation plan outlining how students within each major offered can participate in an experiential learning opportunity within the 8-semester plan. This plan should include the text of the current catalog copy, with “track changes” demonstrating any modifications to eight-semester plans.

- E. Experiential Learning Certification Officers shall have authority to approve exceptions for students who make a compelling case for having met the E requirement SLOs through means other than those specified in the college's implementation plan.
- F. Proposals to establish or change college implementation plans must be approved through the normal curriculum change or GE Committee processes.

## **6. Assessment of E Requirement**

Because participating in experiential learning is not required of each student, natural cohorts of students completing and not completing the E requirement may exist within academic programs. The task force recommends tracking critical student success metrics and comparing these metrics between these cohorts over a period of five years.

## **7. Institutional Implementation**

The following suggestions outline an approach to operationalize Quest Taskforce 3 recommendations to deliver a university-wide experiential education component to the University of Florida undergraduate experience.

- A. Form a standing committee or council to ensure campus-wide coordination of the university-wide experiential learning initiative. This should include representation from campus Centers with a history of engaging students in experiential learning.
- B. Create an office within Undergraduate Affairs to manage the implementation and coordination of experiential aspects of the Quest Program. The office would support departments and faculty, and create connections between organizations that offer experiential learning opportunities. Considerations for implementation of this office are provided in Appendix 2.
- C. Facilitation of the Development of Successful Experiential Learning Opportunities
  - a. Faculty who have served as instructors for existing courses that include experiential learning are valuable resources for the ongoing development of the experiential learning program. The task force recommends engaging past and current instructors in various ways. Such instructors could be on the GE Committee itself or perhaps serve as ad hoc reviewers for proposals for new or modified courses; they might play a role in evaluating courses in progress or in helping advertise the program to other faculty so as to improve faculty participation.
  - b. Funding models should be determined for the development and future success of the program. Many peer institutions have endowed experiential learning programs. Funds should be allocated for development of courses, grants to connect/create community partnerships and programs, and expendables associated with the experience such as laboratory supplies, travel, etc.

## APPENDIX 1

### Sample syllabus verbiage, assignment and rubrics

#### Design

A design experience is defined as students designing or creating an original system, component, form or work that meets the desired needs within reasonable parameters and constraints of the discipline or profession.

#### Student Learning Outcomes

- Content: Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories, and methodologies relevant to the design process.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the design experience.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions relevant to the design experience.

#### Sample Assignment

Through a scholarly product such as a paper, poster, or presentation, students explore the significance of their design experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion. Specifically:

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and discipline.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and describe how they were addressed.
- Students identify, describe, and explain the connection between the discipline or course content and the design or creative activity.
- Students describe and explain how the design experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Accomplished	4 Exemplary
Sense of self and discipline	Indicates minimal insight into self. Cannot identify any aspect of the experience that influenced learning about one's self.	Identifies a change in perspective. Indicates change is related to the experience without providing examples from	Recognizes one or more changes in own perspectives, using at least one example from the experience to illustrate how the experience	Articulates, with specific examples, insights into ways the experience contributed to personal growth as an emerging scholar

		the experience or discipline.	relates to the change.	
Analysis of themes, conflicts, and issues	Shows minimal awareness of issues during experiences.	Describes themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience without a specific example and with little explanation of how it was resolved.	Identifies themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience, using at least one example to illustrate issue and how it was resolved.	Articulates the complexities involved in identifying themes, and in resolving conflicts and issues, that emerged during the experience. Evaluates approaches undertaken to resolve.
Connections between academic pursuits and design activity	Indicates no relationship between the experience and academic pursuits.	Identifies a relationship between the experience and academic pursuits without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes, using at least one example, how the experience and the discipline are related.	Articulates integral connections between the experience and academic pursuits, providing specific examples, into ways the experience interrelates with disciplinary interests.
How experience influences future	Indicates minimal insight into the relationship between the experience and future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.	Identifies in an abstract manner without a specific example, likely changes to future behaviors, attitudes, or career development.	Explains ways the experience will likely impact future behaviors, attitudes, or career development.	Articulates multiple dimensions to ways the experience has already and will continue to impact behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

## Community-Based Learning

Community-based Learning is defined as students identifying issues and needs within the community and develop strategies and/or programs through collaboration with community partners.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Content: Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories and methodologies appropriate to the experience.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the experience.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems facing the community.

### Sample Assignment

Through a scholarly product such as a paper, poster, or presentation, students explore the significance of their community-based learning experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion. Specifically:

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and their place within the larger community.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and social issues that emerged and explain how they may utilize their abilities to address issues within the community
- Students identify and explain the connection between the discipline or course content and the service activity.
- Students describe and explain how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Accomplished	4 Exemplary
Sense of self and place in the community	Indicates minimal insight into self and place. Cannot identify any aspect of the experience that influenced learning about one's self.	Identifies a change in perspective. Indicates change is related to the experience without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes one or more changes in own perspectives, using at least one example from the experience to illustrate how the experience relates to the change.	Articulates, with specific examples, insights into ways the experience contributed to personal growth as an emerging scholar

Analysis of themes, conflicts, and issues	Shows minimal awareness of issues during experiences.	Describes themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience without a specific example and with little explanation of how it was resolved.	Identifies themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience, using at least one example to illustrate issue and how it was resolved.	Articulates the complexities involved in identifying themes, and in resolving conflicts and issues, that emerged during the experience. Evaluates approaches undertaken to resolve.
Connections between academic pursuits and community activity	Indicates no relationship between the experience and academic pursuits.	Identifies a relationship between the experience and academic pursuits without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes, using at least one example, how the experience and the discipline are related.	Articulates integral connections between the experience and academic pursuits, providing specific examples, into ways the experience interrelates with disciplinary interests.
How experience influences future	Indicates minimal insight into the relationship between the experience and future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.	Identifies in an abstract manner without a specific example, likely changes to future behaviors, attitudes, or career development.	Explains ways the experience will likely impact future behaviors, attitudes, or career development.	Articulates multiple dimensions to ways the experience has already and will continue to impact behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

## Study Abroad

A study abroad is defined as students engaging in academic inquiry while interacting effectively with members of other cultures.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Content: Students identify, describe, and explain relevant course content in the context of global and intercultural conditions and interdependencies.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze and interpret global and intercultural issues.
- Communication: Students communicate effectively with members of other cultures or about their cultural experiences.
- Diversity/International: Students develop and convey cultural self-awareness, appreciation of and cultural sensitivity to diverse populations.

## Sample Assignment

Through a scholarly product such as a paper, poster, or presentation, students explore the significance of their Study Abroad experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion. Specifically:

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and host culture.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and describe and explain how they were addressed.
- Students describe and explain how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Accomplished	4 Exemplary
Sense of self and discipline	Indicates minimal insight into self. Cannot identify any aspect of the experience that influenced learning about one's self.	Identifies a change in perspective. Indicates change is related to the experience without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes one or more changes in own perspectives, using at least one example from the experience to illustrate how the experience relates to the change.	Articulates, with specific examples, insights into ways the experience contributed to personal growth as an emerging scholar

Analysis of themes, conflicts, and issues	Shows minimal awareness of issues during experiences.	Describes themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience without a specific example and with little explanation of how it was resolved.	Identifies themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience, using at least one example to illustrate issue and how it was resolved.	Articulates the complexities involved in identifying themes, and in resolving conflicts and issues, that emerged during the experience. Evaluates approaches undertaken to resolve.
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## Internship/Practicum

An internship or practicum is defined as students integrating classroom knowledge, skills, and methods with professional roles, responsibilities, and activities in a supervised setting.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Content: Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories, and methodologies appropriate to the experience.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the experience.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems encountered within the experience.

### Sample Assignment

Through a scholarly product such as a paper, poster, or presentation, students explore the significance of their internship/practicum experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion. Specifically:

- Students identify, describe, and explain how the experience informed their sense of self and understanding of the internship area.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and describe and explain how they were addressed.
- Students identify and connect the knowledge and/or skills gained in their coursework to their internship/practicum observations and experiences.
- Students describe and explain how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development.

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Accomplished	4 Exemplary
Sense of self and discipline	Indicates minimal insight into self. Cannot identify any aspect of the experience that influenced learning about one's self.	Identifies a change in perspective. Indicates change is related to the experience without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes one or more changes in own perspectives, using at least one example from the experience to illustrate how the experience relates to the change.	Articulates, with specific examples, insights into ways the experience contributed to personal growth as an emerging scholar

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Connections between academic pursuits and internship activity	Indicates no relationship between the experience and academic pursuits.	Identifies a relationship between the experience and academic pursuits without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes, using at least one example, how the experience and the discipline are related.	Articulates integral connections between the experience and academic pursuits, providing specific examples, into ways the experience interrelates with disciplinary interests.
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## Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate research is defined as an instructive experience where students make an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Content: Students utilize terminology, concepts, ethical practices, theories and methodologies appropriate to the discipline.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the discipline.
- Critical Thinking: Students formulate empirically-testable hypotheses derived from the discipline of study and/or apply formal and informal qualitative and/or quantitative analysis effectively to examine discipline specific phenomena.

### Sample Assignment

Through a scholarly product such as a paper, poster, or presentation, students explore the significance of their undergraduate research experience through reflection, critical analysis, synthesis, and discussion. Specifically:

- Students explain how the experience informed their sense of self and discipline.
- Students analyze themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged and how they were addressed.
- Students explain the connection between the discipline or course content and the research activity.
- Students explain and describe how the experience will modify and/or support future behaviors, attitudes, and career development

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Accomplished	4 Exemplary
Sense of self and discipline	Indicates minimal insight into self. Cannot identify any aspect of the experience that influenced learning about one's self.	Identifies a change in perspective. Indicates change is related to the experience without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes one or more changes in own perspectives, using at least one example from the experience to illustrate how the experience relates to the change.	Articulates, with specific examples, insights into ways the experience contributed to personal growth as an emerging scholar

Analysis of themes, conflicts, and issues	Shows minimal awareness of issues during experiences.	Describes themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience without a specific example and with little explanation of how it was resolved.	Identifies themes, conflicts, and issues that emerged during the experience, using at least one example to illustrate issue and how it was resolved.	Articulates the complexities involved in identifying themes, and in resolving conflicts and issues, that emerged during the experience. Evaluates approaches undertaken to resolve.
Connections between academic pursuits and research activity	Indicates no relationship between the experience and academic pursuits.	Identifies a relationship between the experience and academic pursuits without providing examples from the experience or discipline.	Recognizes, using at least one example, how the experience and the discipline are related.	Articulates integral connections between the experience and academic pursuits, providing specific examples, into ways the experience interrelates with disciplinary interests.
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## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Considerations for Implementation**

As mentioned, the Taskforce recommends the development of an office within Undergraduate Affairs. Suggested roles of this office would include the following:

#### **Institutional Tracking and Management**

- Communicate expectations to students, faculty, staff, employers/community organizations
- Develop and host training for staff, faculty, on experiential education best practices
- Provide services and materials to aid faculty and staff who serve as experience coordinators
- Manage 0-3 credit courses to provide students with paths for meeting the E requirement
- Provide best practices and collaborative opportunities for college/departments including, but not limited legal issues
- Assess and report student experiences annually

#### **Students/Institutional Partners**

- Provide central location for students to explore and secure experiential learning opportunities
- Help students articulate their growth and preparedness as a result of their time at UF
- Host variety of reflective programs to enhance student learning and meaning making from experiential endeavors

#### **Organizations**

- Provide central location for organizations to share experiential education offerings
- Provide consulting for organizations to aid in development of opportunities including, but not limited to training, supervision, compensation and evaluations

**Staffing** – for the successful implementation, dedicated positions would need to support this effort. The staff would work closely with the already established college/department level Career Embedded Liaisons, internship coordinators, etc. to streamline promotion and management of experiential opportunities.

## **Final Report from Combined Working Group 4**

Dr. Elayne Colon (Task Force Chair, Group 4)

### **Introduction**

The UF Quest program, formerly referred to as UF Core, was proposed in spring 2016 in response to preeminence legislation requiring the University of Florida to devise a shared experience for all First Time in College (FTIC) students (Florida Statute 1001.7065, 2015). To develop recommendations for specific components of the UF Quest program, four task forces (Experiences 1, 2, 3, and ePortfolio) were created and launched in summer, 2016. The ePortfolio Task Force (i.e., Task Force 4) was charged with learning effective methods of ePortfolio assessment and collaborating with the other three task forces to recommend a framework for students to successfully complete ePortfolio assignments that are interwoven into the three UF Quest experiences.

To date, the ePortfolio Task Force has met face-to-face on eight occasions from July, 2016 through March, 2017. Additionally, the Task Force communicated and shared documents via an email listserv and a group workspace created in Canvas. To support the Task Force's recommendations, information was gathered from the following sources: recent peer-refereed journal articles, virtual and phone interviews with administrators and faculty from institutions with large scale ePortfolio implementation, others knowledgeable of ePortfolio implementation in higher education, web sources. Please see below for a comprehensive listing of sources.

### **Executive Summary**

The committee recommends a phased approach to implementation with a period of small-scale piloting of ePortfolios to determine their suitability for the UF Quest Program. The pilot program will gather data to help clarify the purpose of ePortfolios for UF, examine the efficacy of this measure for its intended purpose, and consider the most appropriate point(s) in students' program of study where ePortfolios would best be deployed. If a clear purpose, obvious benefits, and successful places of deployment are realized then a larger effort to secure faculty buy-in and infrastructural resources of a ePortfolio program could follow. Once it is established that there is wide-scale support for ePortfolios among all stakeholders and there are appropriate levels of staffing, then a gradual adoption of ePortfolios throughout the UF Quest Program should be considered.

### **Specific Recommendations**

Based on information gathered and discussions among task force members, the ePortfolio Task Force recommendations are outlined below. Recommendations are organized chronologically, in a series of three phases, to align with the suggested implementation model of a gradual adoption of ePortfolios based on data to support its continuance.

#### **Phase 1 –**

**Recommendation: Clearly define and broadly share the purpose(s) of the ePortfolio as part of the UF Quest program. The purpose should be distinct from other benefits of ePortfolios.**

The purpose of the ePortfolio should be clearly defined and well-articulated to students and other stakeholders. It is recommended that the primary purposes of the ePortfolio for incoming FTIC students be to: (1) *facilitate the integration of student learning and connections made across coursework and experiences*, and (2) *serve as evidence to demonstrate student growth during students' time at the university*.

At the outset, the ePortfolio should be narrowly focused to accomplish the stated purposes for the UF Quest program. Once the ePortfolio has been successfully launched with the three UF Quest experiences, then opportunities to scale or extend the initiative to include other student courses or experiences should be considered.

**Recommendation: Gather more information regarding previous and existing ePortfolio efforts at UF.**

To establish an understanding of prior and existing ePortfolio efforts on campus, the following questions should be answered about these initiatives:

- What are/were resources (financial, personnel, etc.) and existing mechanisms for support?
- What are the intended purposes at the efforts' core?
- What hurdles have been encountered along the way/why did the effort cease?
- What methods of assessment are involved?
- What is the overall calendar of effort over the course of the academic year?
- What were the students' reactions/attitudes toward being assigned an ePortfolio?
- What strategies did you use to encourage student buy-in?
- How can early adopters be made into champions of the initiative?

From information gathered regarding existing campus ePortfolio efforts, three to four faculty/staff might be identified to serve as early champions. Compensated with a stipend, these individuals could serve in some part-time capacity as consultants to assist faculty engaging in early UF Quest ePortfolio efforts.

**Recommendation: Establish messaging and marketing of ePortfolios as it fits within larger UF Quest Program.**

Once an implementation timeline for the pilot study has been finalized, clear communication to students, faculty, staff, and other relevant stakeholders must occur. As with the larger UF Quest program, clear messaging and broad marketing of the ePortfolio's purpose and infrastructure for technical and pedagogical support must be shared with students and other relevant stakeholders at the outset. Students should clearly understand which courses (or sections of courses) and experiences include ePortfolio requirements and how these individual ePortfolio components are connected and related across their program of study and connected to other aspects of student life.

**Phase 2 –**

**Recommendation: Establish a well-defined support structure with a clear office to support ePortfolios as part of UF Quest Program.**

The success of a campus-wide ePortfolio program will depend a great deal on the proper recruitment and placement of champions at all levels. In addition to a centralized UF Quest office staffed with appropriate experts (pedagogical, IT, assessment), faculty, advisors, and staff in every college must be able to provide consistent, accurate support, both theoretical and logistic, to our students. Support should include ways in which ePortfolios can provide mechanism for students to make explicit connections between coursework and other campus experiences. For such support, those faculty, advisors, and staff will need comprehensive training and ongoing professional development. Funding to support the infrastructure and ongoing technical and pedagogical support should be carefully planned to ensure sustainability.

**Recommendation: Determine a clear assessment framework, including how and when ePortfolio artifacts will be assessed, and by whom.**

To evaluate ePortfolios and assess the UF Quest program in general, there must be a centralized assessment officer to provide training and consistency. For General Education assessment, there should be set rubrics based on learning outcomes established in the three UF Quest experiences (i.e., two courses and experiential learning), and thus some set ePortfolio structure is necessary; if assessment is to be carried through to graduation, then major-specific evaluation may later become necessary. An ePortfolio Assessment committee should be considered to create rubrics, with membership including some faculty from approved UF Quest experiences. The centralized UF Quest office should be in charge of access to and tracking of both individual student data and aggregate data for ePortfolios.

**Recommendation: Determine a common platform to house ePortfolios.**

To date, the Task Force's work has primarily focused on gathering evidence to inform recommendations around process and logistics of establishing an ePortfolio for undergraduates as part of the UF Quest program. This was intentional so as to design a framework and suggest desired features without being limited by the functionality of any one platform. Therefore, only incidental information has been collected regarding platforms to host ePortfolios. Nevertheless, below are preliminary observations based on the Task Force's work thus far.

Learning Management System	Positive	Negative
Canvas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students/faculty/staff already have access</li> <li>• Would not cost anything</li> <li>• Ease of use</li> <li>• Single login</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happens after graduation?</li> <li>• Students have to share access</li> <li>• Not as aesthetically pleasing</li> <li>• May change LMS in future</li> </ul>
Pebblepad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used successfully on other campuses</li> <li>• Is designed for evaluative purposes</li> <li>• More aesthetically pleasing</li> <li>• Ease of use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price</li> <li>• Potentially another login (supports LTI integration with Canvas)</li> <li>• Privacy concerns (who owns the materials?)</li> <li>• Learning curve</li> <li>• May fold or be bought</li> </ul>

UF Designed ePortfolio System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be solely for the ePortfolio program at UF</li> <li>• Can be aesthetically pleasing</li> <li>• Ensure privacy/ownership</li> <li>• Belongs to UF, so no concern about it going away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time to develop</li> <li>• Money to develop</li> <li>• What happens after graduation?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
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**Recommendation: Ongoing messaging and marketing the ePortfolio to all stakeholders is of utmost importance.**

Clear communication to students, faculty, staff, and other relevant stakeholders must be consistent and ongoing. While the ePortfolio will be launched and piloted first within the UF Quest program, it is extremely important that Colleges and other campus stakeholders clearly understand the purpose and scope of the initiative. As some ePortfolios already exist on campus, the UF Quest office should work closely with these stakeholders to avoid duplication of services, multiplication of costs, and confusion should students and instructors find themselves required to navigate multiple systems to accomplish similar goals.

In addition to the purpose, there exist other benefits of ePortfolios that should be shared as part of the larger ePortfolio marketing effort. These include: providing a metacognitive tool for students to consider how certain experiences have impacted their time at UF; a product for students to prepare for interviews with employers and potentially share with prospective employers; a space for guided conversations, mentoring, and collaboration to occur; a means to teach students to cultivate their digital identity; a platform for students to build autonomy around their UF experience and showcase their work to multiple audiences; another way for faculty to examine their teaching practices; a way to assess the UF Quest program; a mechanism to retain students and promote academic success. Benefits should be shared broadly but should not be confused with the primary intent, or purpose, of ePortfolio implementation at UF.

### **Phase 3 -**

**Recommendation: Implement the ePortfolio in stages, or start with a small pilot of existing ePortfolio users. Data should be collected to systematically examine its efficacy.**

Introducing the ePortfolio in a staged manner would foster success by: 1) permitting underlying infrastructure, both in technology and human resources, to develop to a level where they could support a campus-wide integration, 2) enabling learning and growth of the initiative, making it an iterative process, allowing the assessment and adjustment of the ePortfolio initiative to best incorporate its use in reflective thinking and integrative learning for our students, and 3) develop a stronger base of faculty users and champions who can help at each successive phase. One tactic would be to start with a pilot focused on a single department or degree that already uses portfolios in some degree, and expand their use to include the goals of the UF Quest ePortfolio. The pilot initiative must have measureable data which will clearly indicate to us the success of the pilot and indicate the next steps we should take.

**Questions related to this recommendation:**

What order would different cohorts or courses be incorporated into the ePortfolio initiative, and on what timeline?

How can early adopters be made into champions?

**Recommendation: A range of incentives should be employed to ensure willingness of volunteers to secure necessary engagement and a sustained commitment to the success of ePortfolios.**

To secure buy-in of students, faculty, and staff, a range incentives should be considered to secure participation. Incentives may include monetary compensation, travel funds, and/or course buy-outs for faculty. For students, incentives may include awards or other forms of recognition of participating and showcasing their work for others. In addition, involving students in every step of the process from start to finish will ensure a higher percentage of buy-in, as well as provide a later opportunity for student-to-student ePortfolio mentoring.

**Questions related to this recommendation:**

What exactly will faculty and students be volunteering to do?

What is the process for volunteering for faculty? For students?

How many volunteers are reasonable to start with during the initial implementation phase?

What is the process for selecting among those faculty and students volunteering?

How will the opportunity be communicated?

What support can increase the likelihood that volunteers have a positive experience?

**Recommendation: Continue to consult with knowledgeable others to inform the development and refinement of the ePortfolio moving forward.**

The Task Force recommends that the proposed pilot initiative proceed in consultation with those with whom we have been in touch at other universities who have gone down this road before us. Specifically, as we propose, implement, and gather data from a pilot study we should establish and consult with an Advisory Board of experienced ePortfolio managers outside of UF.

## Sources

To inform these recommendations, information was gathered from the following

sources: **Virtual (Zoom) Sessions –**

- Gail Ring, PebblePad
- Dr. Matt Serra (Director of Assessment, Trinity College), Dr. Jennifer Hill (Associate Director of Assessment, Trinity College), Dr. Elise Mueller (Center of Instructional Technology), Duke University
- Candyce Reynolds, Portland State University

**Phone calls –**

- Bob Brackett, Assistant Director, Undergraduate Assessment, Clemson University
- Mary S. Hoffschwelle, Middle Tennessee State University

**Readings and Websites –**

Benander, R., & Refaei, B. (2016). How Authors and Readers of ePortfolios Make Collaborative Meaning. *International Journal of ePortfolio*, 6(2).

Cambridge, D. (2012). E-portfolios: Go big or go home. *Educause Review*, 47(2), 52-53.

Hains-Wesson, R., Wakeling, L., & Aldred, P. (2014). A university-wide ePortfolio initiative at Federation University Australia: Software analysis, test-to-production, and evaluation phases. *International Journal of ePortfolios*, 4(2), 143-156.

Posey, L., Plack, M., Snyder, R., Dinneen, P., Feuer, M., & Wiss, A. (2015). Developing a pathway for institution wide eportfolio program. *International Journal for ePortfolio*, 5(1), 75-92.

Reynolds, C., & Pirie, M. S. (2016). Creating an Eportfolio Culture on Campus through Platform Selection and Implementation. *Peer Review*, 18(3), 21.

Ring, G., & Ramirez, B. (2012). Implementing ePortfolios for the assessment of general education competencies. *International Journal of ePortfolio*, 2(1), 87-97.

Ring, G., Ramirez, B., & Brackett, B. (2016). ePortfolios and Faculty Engagement: Measuring Change Through Structured Experiences. *International Journal of ePortfolio*, 6(1).

<https://sites.duke.edu/portfolio/>  
<https://www.aacu.org/peerreview/2016/summer>

## **Webinars –**

*The Ever-Expanding Role for Portfolios in Higher Education*, Eduventures (September 2016)

*SBS STUDENT PATHWAYS: How ePortfolio Can Bridge Curriculum and Advising to Enhance Student Learning*, Jacqueline Brousseau-Pereira, Director of Student Success and Retention, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Massachusetts Amherst, sponsored by Taskstream (November 2016)

## **Sample Campus and Local Use of ePortfolios –**

College of Engineering, Freshman Transition Program

International Scholars Program

<https://www.ufic.ufl.edu/UAP/InternationalScholarsProgram.html>

University Writing Program

College of Education, School Psychology and Elementary Education (SITE) Programs

College of Nursing (evaluation and awarding of 30 credits to their UF Online RN to BSN students)

Santa Fe College, International Center

<http://www.sfcollege.edu/international/index.php?section=eportfolio>



| **UF QUEST** |

# UF Quest Assessment

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*FACULTY GUIDE AND RUBRICS FOR UF QUEST 1 and 2*

The UF Quest Assessment Task Force

TIMOTHY S. BROPHY, DIRECTOR, INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT | OFFICE OF THE PROVOST



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## FACULTY GUIDE: THE UF QUEST 1 and 2 ASSESSMENT

### UF Quest: General Education Re-envisioned

UF Quest is a general education experience shared by all first-time-in-college students at UF that accompanies them in their growth and maturity throughout their entire undergraduate experience. UF Quest provides a combination of coursework in the humanities, natural sciences, and social science and experiential learning, in which faculty, graduate students, staff, and peers engage students in the multifaceted problems of this complex and interconnected world and challenge them to discover where they can best apply their gifts to advance solutions. UF Quest provides a uniform opportunity for all students to enhance their ability to communicate effectively, think critically, solve problems, and reflect deeply. It is a vehicle and model for instilling the fundamental values of education that UF espouses and to which all in UF should aspire to achieve.

UF Quest holds the following fundamental, aspirational values:

- The student is the center of our work at UF, regardless of what the work involves.
- The subjects of general education reside at the core of every discipline of study and are thus essential for preparing a student for navigating this complex and interconnected world in which we live together.
- We at UF hold at a premium and value most highly the following:
  - *Learning*: our compass regardless of our role
  - *Quality relationships*: among humans, with the subjects of study, with the surrounding world
  - *Expectations we hold for all in UF*: set them high; communicate them often; understand our respective roles; hold ourselves and all accountable
  - *Leadership at UF*: shared responsibility and at all levels; from shared goals and mission that are communicated clearly and often
  - *Integrity*: alignment of practices, policies, student learning, actions, words
  - *Diversity and Inclusion*: inclusive, supportive, and respectful to all members of the community and their diverse experiences and backgrounds
  - *Openness to improvement*: our own, our students', the community's

UF Quest is:

- Multidisciplinary in nature to open students to the greater world.
- Sequential and increasingly challenging from years 1 through 4.
- An opportunity for ongoing reflection that makes learning relevant, fosters meaning-making in purpose, and provides students an accurate sense of their progress,
- Preparation for the rigor of college,
- A celebration of general education,
- Engagement and relationship-building, where faculty can know students by name, and
- Delivered by faculty who model all values *with* heart and who are *at* the heart of UF Quest.

(adapted from Lindner, 2019)



## Why Assess UF Quest?

Assessment is a common practice across the University of Florida campus. Faculty assess their students' exams, papers, projects, presentations, performances, productions, and other assignments in order to (a) gauge their students' learning, (b) identify gaps or weaknesses in student learning, and (c) modify instruction and/or curriculum to strengthen student learning. Our 2017 faculty focus group study on assessment at UF found that

*UF faculty value the assessment of student learning and the information it provides. In every college, faculty described clearly the ways they collect and use student learning information. As one participant stated, "we learn how effective we are as instructors," and that their student learning information helps them to "make adjustments to the course." (University of Florida, 2017).*

We assess UF Quest at the institutional level to determine its effectiveness at achieving the SLOs and aims of the program. Institutional Assessment works in a corollary fashion to the faculty process but with different outcomes and data without reference to student grades or faculty performance. The assessment data that faculty provide through the UF Quest rubrics (or other approved methods) are analyzed to determine the degree to which students are achieving the UF Quest SLOs. The results of analysis are used to determine how we can modify and improve the assessment process, e.g. procedures, criteria, measurement scales, professional development, etc., and how we can strengthen UF Quest.

## The UF Quest Assessment Task Force

The [UF Quest Assessment Task Force](#) was convened in fall 2019 and charged to develop the institutional assessment plan for UF Quest. The [Task Force members](#) represented all of the colleges on campus that provide UF Quest courses, as well as experts in instructional design, assessment, and measurement from across the university. After review of the Quest Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and considerable deliberation and collaboration, the Task Force developed rubrics to assess at the institutional level the various artifacts that students would produce in UF Quest courses. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each type of student work, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. Faculty assessment of the criteria provide data that inform student achievement of the UF Quest SLOs.

## The UF Quest Student Learning Outcomes

Florida Board of Governor's regulation 8.016, [Student Learning Outcomes Assessment](#), requires that all undergraduate programs at the University of Florida have student learning outcomes (SLOs) in three categories: content (disciplinary knowledge and skills), communication, and critical thinking. The UF General Education Committee has defined these categories for UF, and the UF Quest SLOs align with these categories. The fourth category, *connection*, was added to accommodate the unique focus of UF Quest on reflection and meaning-making. The outcomes are shown in Table 1.



Table 1. *UF Quest 1 and 2 Student Learning Outcomes*

SLO Category	UF Definition	UF Quest 1 SLOs: Arts and Humanities	UF Quest 2 SLOs: Physical and Social Sciences
<b>Content</b>	Content is knowledge of the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the subject area.	Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.	Identify, describe, and explain the cross-disciplinary dimensions of a pressing societal issue or challenge as represented by the social sciences and/or biophysical sciences incorporated into the course.
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Critical thinking is characterized by the comprehensive analysis of issues, ideas, and evidence before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.	Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.	Critically analyze quantitative or qualitative data appropriate for informing an approach, policy, or praxis that addresses some dimension of an important societal issue or challenge.
<b>Communication</b>	Communication is the development and expression of ideas in written and oral forms.	Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.	Develop and present, in terms accessible to an educated public, clear and effective responses to proposed approaches, policies, or practices that address important societal issues or challenges
<b>Connection (Unique to Quest)</b>	Connection is the meaningful integration and application of student learning to the student's life and work.	Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.	Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.



## Assignment Types

The Task Force identified five types of assignments that are common in undergraduate education for the institutional assessment of the UF Quest Student Learning Outcomes. These are:

- *Presentation* – a speech or a talk in which a new product, idea, or piece of work is shown and explained to an audience.
- *Paper* – a written work of specified length on a topic, in one of several forms, e.g., research paper, position paper, essay, article, story, poem, script, libretto, etc.
- *Project* – a planned undertaking, usually in the form of a response to a task or problem engaged in by students.
- *Performance/ Production* – a performance/production is a literary (e.g., story, poem, play, libretto, essay, critique) or artistic work (music, dance, drama, visual art, media), presented or exhibited to the public on stage, screen, or in a physical or digital space.
- *Reflection* – a written statement arising from serious thought or consideration given to the examination and/or exploration of how the writer has changed, developed, or grown from experience or interaction with some subject matter, idea, or purpose.

These assignments produce student work, sometimes referred to as artifacts, that faculty assess for grading purposes. While the faculty establish their own criteria for assignment grading, the UF Quest assessment rubrics present the criteria established by the Task Force to assess the institutional outcomes.

Another common assessment type is the examination. Exams are usually scored using an interval scale that provides a number of points earned as the measure of achievement. No rubric was developed for examinations. Faculty are welcome to use examinations as a measure of UF Quest SLO achievement as long as the examination is valid for that purpose. Faculty who wish to use an examination for UF Quest assessment should contact Timothy S. Brophy, Director of Institutional Assessment at [tbrophy@aa.ufl.edu](mailto:tbrophy@aa.ufl.edu).

## Rubric Development

The Task Force developed five rubrics, one for the assessment of each of these assignment types.

### Elements of Design

*Rubric type.* The UF Quest rubrics are analytic – the criteria are listed in the left column and the levels of achievement are listed across the rows of each criterion.

*Criteria.* The rubrics present the criteria that the Task Force developed to define the components they determined were essential for the student work to demonstrate the institutional SLOs. Each criterion links to a UF Quest SLO.

*Parallel construction.* The achievement levels address the same parameters for quality at each level. The levels of quality are differentiated by descriptors that address the differing degrees at which the student work displays or demonstrates the criteria.



**Rubric Achievement Levels.** The levels of achievement are designed to describe in sufficient detail the characteristics and components of student work developed for UF Quest assignments. The Task Force developed a 4-level nominal scale: 4, 3, 2, 1. It is important to note that the nominal scale values are not scores; *they represent the faculty's judgment of the level and quality of the student's achievement based on evidence in the student's work.* The Task Force carefully considered the qualities that distinguish each criterion within a range of responses that are typically encountered when grading undergraduate work. The Task Force chose to identify level 3 as the *target level* of achievement – the level that would be expected from each student to meet faculty expectations. Lower levels describe works that display achievement near (2) and below (1) the target. Level 4 is reserved for those works that are above and beyond the target. Faculty should make these distinctions based on their professional judgment and assign the level of achievement they determine to be most appropriate. Table 2 presents descriptions of the levels of achievement.

Table 2. Achievement level descriptions for the UF Quest Rubrics

Achievement Level	Interpretation
4	Above target. The student work is exceptional, above and beyond the target, and exceeds faculty expectations.
3	Target. Work that meets faculty expectations.
2	Near target. Achievement is near the target, lacking important details or connections to reach faculty expectations.
1	Below target. Achievement is below the target, absent or missing significant elements; the work does not meet faculty expectations.

**Format.** The rubrics are formatted consistently across the assignment types. The far left columns present the associated Quest institutional outcomes. Column 3 presents the assessment criteria, in this order: content, critical thinking, communication, and connection. Columns 4-7 present the achievement level descriptions.

**Grading.** The UF Quest Rubrics are not intended to be used for grading student work. However, faculty may use these for grading (in full or in part) if they find them appropriate for this purpose. Two other useful resources available on the Institutional Assessment website are the UF guide to [Writing Effective Rubrics](#) on the Faculty Resources webpage and the [AAC&U VALUE rubrics](#) on the Academic Assessment Planning web page.

**Glossary.** Each rubric presents a brief glossary of terms that are used in the rubric. The purpose of the glossary is to clarify how specific terms are to be interpreted when scoring student work. The complete glossary of UF Quest Assessment terms is presented after the reference list in this guide.



## Reflection: A Central Component of UF Quest

A key distinctive component of UF Quest courses are the embedded opportunities for students to reflect on their work in order to connect their learning to their daily lives, plans, and aspirations. As Lindner (2019) advises: reflection makes learning relevant, and this is a primary way that students make meaning of their learning experiences at UF.

A *reflection* is a written or recorded statement arising from serious thought, consideration, examination, and/or exploration of how the writer has changed, developed, or grown from experience or interaction with some subject matter, idea, or purpose. For UF Quest, reflections describe how student's lived curriculum (what has been learned to date) and the student's experience with the delivered curriculum (the UF Quest course) connects to their future plans and goals. Essential to the reflection process is meaning-making - the process of how people construe, understand, or make sense of life events, relationships, and the self. The rubrics for papers, projects, presentations, and performances/productions developed for this project contain a criterion that addresses reflection. There is also a separate rubric for reflections that are standalone assignments.

## The Faculty Role in the Institutional Assessment of UF Quest

As Lindner (2019) attests, faculty are at the heart – and are the heart - of the UF Quest program. Therefore, faculty play a primary role in the assessment of the success of UF Quest as an institutional program. This list outlines the faculty role in the assessment process.

- *The number of students to be assessed.* We will select a random sample of 20% of your students to include in the assessment. You will only need to assess the students in the sample. You may, however, include other students if you wish.
- *Your existing rubrics remain intact.* The UF Quest assessment does not require you to substitute or replace your existing rubrics. Your rubrics remain exactly as you have developed them. The UF Quest rubrics are to be applied in addition to your existing rubrics for 20% of your students.
- *Assignment selection.* You will select at least one existing assignment to use for the assessment. The UF Quest Assessment Task Force developed rubrics for five types of assignments: papers, presentations, projects, performances/productions, and standalone reflections. (The rubrics for papers, presentations, projects, performances/productions include a criterion for reflection).
- *Canvas support.* Once you select your assignment(s), you will be assisted by an Instructional Designer to set up in Canvas the UF Quest rubric that best matches your assignment type.
- *The assessment criteria.* Each UF Quest rubric has five criteria for institutional assessment. The criteria will be entered at the bottom of your existing rubric and assessed at the same time that you grade the assignment (in Speed Grader, assuming you plan to use that tool).
- *Ratings.* You will rate the UF Quest rubric criteria at one of four levels of achievement described in each rubric. The ratings are not associated with the student's grade.
- *Data collection.* The levels of achievement you assign will load automatically into a different gradebook than the one that collects your grading information. This is the *Learning Management Gradebook*, which the instructional designers will set up for you. Once you have completed the assessment, we will go into Canvas and collect the ratings you have assigned.



To summarize, here is what faculty will do:

- Review the guide and the rubrics.
- Select one or more assignments to use as the assessment.
- Work with the instructional designer who will set up the rubrics in Canvas for you.
- Apply the rubrics to the assignments submitted by the students in your 20% sample.
- When you submit your ratings, they will automatically load into the Learning Management Gradebook.
- Provide feedback on the process so that we can modify and improve.

## Contact Information

For questions about the process or to discuss the validity of a specific measure, please contact:

Andrew Oxman Wolpert, PhD  
Director of UF Quest and Associate Professor of Classics  
Office of Undergraduate Affairs  
138 Dauer Hall  
Phone: 352-273-3702  
Email: [wolpert@ufl.edu](mailto:wolpert@ufl.edu)

Timothy S. Brophy, PhD  
Professor and Director, Institutional Assessment  
239C Tigert Hall, Office of the Provost  
Phone: 352-273-4476  
Email: [tbrophy@aa.ufl.edu](mailto:tbrophy@aa.ufl.edu)



## UF Quest Assessment Glossary

**Audience.** A group for whom a work is developed and/or intended and to whom it is delivered.

**Audience experience.** The cognitive and affective responses that evoke from the interactions between audience members and performers during or as a result of a performance, production, presentation, or other interaction with a work.

**Audience understanding.** The listener/observer's comprehension of a presenter's content, objectives, and/or intent.

**Compelling.** Evoking interest, attention, admiration, or respect with a powerful or irresistible effect.

**Conclusion.** A synthesis of key findings drawn from research or evidence.

**Context of the work.** The circumstances that form the setting and/or parameters of a written work, presentation, performance, production, or project, including but not limited to disciplinary conventions, format (e.g. digital, print, recording), methodology, subject matter, and course expectations.

**Delivered curriculum.** The curriculum that is planned and taught by the faculty. Adapted from: Yancey, (1998).

**Direct Assessment.** The examination and assessment of actual samples of student work. These include but are not limited to papers, theses, dissertations, projects, performances, and exams.

**Effectiveness.** The analysis of multiple data sources to identify strengths, areas for improvement, student success, and outcomes achievement.

**Elegant.** Refers to works that are concise, clear, and refined.

**Experiential learning.** Experiential learning is a process through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting. (University of Colorado-Denver Experiential Learning Center, 2019). Experiential learning opportunities offer students assignments and activities based on real-life situations or primary research that engages them in reflective problem-solving with multiple potential avenues of inquiry. (University of Texas at Austin Faculty Innovations Center, 2019).

**Faculty-selected artifact.** A sample of student work that the faculty member has chosen as *best evidence* of one or more *Quest outcomes*.

**High quality evidence.** Quantitative or qualitative evidence (e.g., data, theories, ideas, analyses) drawn from respected, established sources; and/or directly observed, recorded, and validated.

**Innovative.** That which is imaginative, new, original and the process of turning it into reality.

**Integrate.** Connect to and/or synthesize the components of the work (e.g., materials, results, techniques, methods, etc.) with course content knowledgeably and effectively.

**Intention.** What the creator of a work plans and/or expects a work to evoke or mean to an audience.

**Learning experience.** Any interaction or engagement with the UF Quest delivered curriculum in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic or nontraditional settings.

**Life relevance.** Occurs when learning experiences are connected in some way to real-world issues, problems, and contexts.

**Lived curriculum.** The total of what students have learned to date. Adapted from: Yancey, K. B. (1998).

**Logical.** Of or according to the principles of logic or formal argument; characterized by or capable of clear, sound reasoning.

**Meaning.** An important, worthwhile quality of implied or explicit significance.

**Meaningful.** For an individual, that which is deemed important, worthwhile, significant, and/or purposeful.



- Meaning-making.** The process of how individuals make sense of knowledge, experience, relationships, and the self. (Ignelzi, 2002, December 15).
- Paper.** A written work of specified length on a topic, in one of several forms, i.e. research paper, essay, article, opinion, etc.
- Performance/ Production.** A literary (e.g., story, poem, play, libretto, essay, critique) or artistic work (music, dance, drama, visual art, media), presented or exhibited to the public on stage, screen, or virtually in a digital space (e.g., podcast, video).
- Personal relevance.** Occurs when learning is connected to an individual student's interests, aspirations, and life experiences.
- Personal understanding.** The result of an individual's assimilation of learning experiences in the context of their prior learning, personal history, and personal development.
- Presentation.** A speech, talk, or digital communication in which a new product, idea, or piece of work is shown and explained to an audience.
- Project.** A planned undertaking, usually in the form of a response to a task or problem engaged in by students.
- Purpose.** The reason for or aim of a work.
- Rationale.** A set of reasons or a logical basis for a course of action or a particular belief.
- Reflection.** A written statement arising from serious thought or consideration given to the examination and/or exploration of how the writer has changed, developed, or grown from experience or interaction with some subject matter, idea, or purpose.
- Relevance.** The quality or state of being closely connected or appropriate.
- Reliability/Precision:** Reliability/precision refers to the general notion of the consistency of the scores across instances of the assessment procedure. (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014, p. 33).
- Rigor:** The degree of academic precision and thoroughness required for academic expectations or outcomes to be met successfully. (University of Florida Institutional Assessment, 2019, p. 4).
- Rubric:** A written guide for assessing student work. At a minimum, it lists the things you are looking for when you assess student work. (Suskie, 2018, p. 190).
- Significant.** Of importance or consequence. *Statistics:* of or relating to observations that are unlikely to occur by chance and that therefore indicate a systematic cause.
- Significant or challenging issue.** A social or disciplinary topic, problem or imperative that is important, relevant, and/or difficult.
- Scope.** The extent of the breadth or range of the area covered in a work.
- Sophisticated.** Displays knowledgeable and adept use of methods and/or resources to convey content, objectives, and/or intent.
- Student artifact:** A self-selected sample of student work that illustrates the student's achievement of one or more of the *Quest outcomes*.
- Transformational.** Refers to experiences, ideas, products, etc. that lead to a significant change.
- Validity:** Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of assessment results for the proposed uses of the assessments. Validity has to do with the inferences we make based on the results of an assessment and is determined by the evidence we have that can substantiate the claims we make about what our assessment results tell us. (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014, p. 11).



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UF QUEST

*UF Quest Assessment*

## The Rubrics



## UF Quest Rubric - Paper

### Definition

A *paper* is a written work of specified length on a topic, in one of several forms, e.g., research paper, position paper, essay, article, story, poem, script, libretto, etc.

### Description and Use

This rubric has been designed for use in any UF Quest course in which a paper is assigned, with the full understanding that not all UF Quest courses include papers as assignments. The Task Force developed the rubric with the assumption that the paper assignment is appropriate for the UF Quest course and associated disciplines. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use to determine the degree to which students achieve the UF [Quest 1](#) and [Quest 2](#) student learning outcomes. The rubric presents the associated institutional outcomes for each criterion.

For the UF Quest institutional assessment, faculty translate their assessment of one or more selected student papers assigned in their course into the levels of achievement described in the rubric. The language in this rubric is intentionally broad and designed to be applied to multiple types of papers from a wide variety of assignments and disciplines. The first four criteria – content, critical thinking, clarity and organization, and expression – represent the universal components of papers written in undergraduate education. The fifth criterion, reflection, is a unique component of UF Quest, where students connect their learning experience from the paper assignment to their personal and professional growth at UF.

### Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric.

- *Audience.* A group for whom a work is intended and presented.
- *Conclusion.* A synthesis of key findings or experiences drawn from observation, research, or evidence.
- *Context of the work.* The circumstances that form the setting and/or parameters of a written work, performance, production, or project, including but not limited to format (e.g. digital, print, recording), methodology, subject matter, and course expectations.
- *High quality evidence.* Quantitative or qualitative evidence (e.g., data, theories, ideas, analyses) drawn from respected, established sources, and/or directly observed, recorded, and validated.
- *Intention.* What the creator of a work plans and/or expects a work to evoke or mean to an audience.
- *Learning experience.* Any interaction or engagement with the UF Quest delivered curriculum in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings or nontraditional settings, or whether it includes traditional educational interactions or nontraditional interactions.
- *Logical.* Of or according to the principles of logic or formal argument; characterized by or capable of clear, sound reasoning.
- *Purpose.* The reason for or aim of the work.
- *Rationale.* A set of reasons or a logical basis for a course of action or a particular belief.
- *Scope.* The extent of the breadth or range of the area covered in the work.



## UF QUEST PAPER RUBRIC

		Criteria	4	3 (Target)	2	1
UF Quest Outcomes	Content	<b>Content</b> <i>Appropriately and substantially covers the purpose and scope.</i>	Thoroughly addresses all key concepts appropriate for the purpose and scope. Information is accurate and supported by ample, appropriate, high quality evidence.	Addresses key concepts appropriate for the purpose and scope. Information is accurate and sufficiently supported by appropriate evidence.	Does not fully address key concepts or is missing a key concept appropriate for the purpose and scope. Some information is missing, and/or not adequately supported by appropriate evidence.	Does not adequately address key concepts appropriate for the purpose and scope. Frequently information is missing and/or not adequately supported by appropriate evidence.
	Critical Thinking	<b>Critical Thinking</b> <i>Analyzes and evaluates issues, evidence, and diverse sources to form a conclusion (judgment or new idea).</i>	Conclusions are insightful or provide a unique viewpoint. Evidence provides rationale for the conclusion and is comprehensive-covers diverse viewpoints, and includes a powerful evaluation of context, perspectives of self and sources, and limitations.	Conclusions are logical and address all important ideas. Evidence provides rationale for the conclusion, covers multiple viewpoints, and includes an adequate evaluation of context, perspectives of self and sources, and limitations.	Conclusions are logical and address the most important ideas. Lacks incorporation of a key perspective or adequate evaluation thereof.	Conclusions may be logical but not necessarily focused on primary ideas. Lacks incorporation of some key perspectives or adequate evaluation thereof.
	Communication	<b>Clarity and Organization</b> <i>Logically, clearly and cohesively presents ideas, including all needed components (purpose and scope, methods, results, conclusions, referencing, etc.).</i>	Integrates all necessary components to create a compelling work that is logical, clear, cohesive, and focused.	Integrates all necessary components to create a logical, clear and cohesive flow of ideas.	The paper may include all necessary components, but they are not fully developed or presented logically, diminishing clarity and cohesion of some ideas.	Ideas are not presented separately, lack a logical flow, or are sometimes ambiguous, or non-specific. The assigned style is not addressed or so inconsistent that it impedes the reader.
	Communication	<b>Expression</b> <i>Expression and style represent the student's voice, demonstrate respectful discourse, and are appropriate for the context of the work.</i>	Expression and style choices powerfully convey the writer's intentions. Discourse illustrates the appropriate style while showcasing the student's unique voice and demonstrating respectful discourse in an engaging way.	Expression and style choices convey the writer's intentions clearly. Discourse illustrates the appropriate style while reflecting the student's voice and demonstrating respectful discourse.	Expression and style choices do not fully convey the writer's intentions. Discourse inconsistently illustrates appropriate style while reflecting the student's voice and demonstrating respectful discourse.	Expression and style choices impede the writer's intentions and do not demonstrate respectful discourse and the context of the work.
	Connection	<b>Reflection</b> <i>Connects the learning experience to the student's intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond</i>	A thoughtful, profound, and insightful connection of the learning experience to previous learning and the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	A basic connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	A partial and incomplete connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	Provides a superficial connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

## UF Quest Rubric – Presentation

### Definition

A *presentation* is a speech, talk, or digital communication in which a new product, idea, or piece of work is shown and explained to an audience.

### Description and Use

This rubric has been designed for use in any UF Quest course in which a presentation is assigned, with the full understanding that not all UF Quest courses include assignments for presentations. The Task Force developed the rubric with the assumption that the presentation assignment is appropriate for the UF Quest course and associated disciplines. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use to determine the degree to which students achieve the UF [Quest 1](#) and [Quest 2](#) student learning outcomes. The rubric presents the associated institutional outcomes for each criterion.

For the UF Quest institutional assessment, faculty translate their assessment of one or more selected student presentation into the levels of achievement described in the rubric. The language in this rubric is purposely broad and designed to be applied to multiple types of presentation from a wide variety of assignments and disciplines. The criteria – content, materials, delivery, and organization – represent the universal components of presentations in undergraduate education. The fifth criterion, reflection, is a unique component of UF Quest, where students connect their learning experience from the paper assignment to their personal and professional growth at UF.

### Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- *Audience*. A group for whom a work is developed and/or intended and to whom it is delivered.
- *Audience understanding*. The listener/observer's comprehension of a presenter's content, objectives, and/or intent.
- *Elegant*. Refers to presentations that are concise, clear, and refined.
- *Meaning*. An important, worthwhile quality of implied or explicit significance.
- *Sophisticated*. Displays knowledgeable and adept use of methods and/or resources to convey content, objectives, and/or intent.



### UF QUEST PRESENTATION RUBRIC

		Criteria	4	3 (Target)	2	1
UF Quest Outcomes	Content	<b>Content</b> <i>Demonstrates knowledge of the topic presented, balances depth and breadth effectively.</i>	Knowledge presented is relevant and exceeds and/or enhances the course material. Content reflects breadth and depth of knowledge in the topic area that exceeds expectations.	Knowledge presented reflects course material adequately. Content presented reflects the expected level of depth and breadth.	Knowledge presented reflects some gaps in knowledge of course material. Content reflects limited breadth or depth.	Knowledge presented reflects major gaps in knowledge of course material. Content is superficially represented, incomplete, and/or unrelated to the topic.
	Critical Thinking	<b>Materials</b> <i>Selects appropriate media/ physical/tools engage audience, materials, and technology to effectively convey the topic message.</i>	Media and materials are ideally suited to convey the topic message, balanced throughout the presentation, and facilitates audience engagement.	Media and materials are appropriate for the topic message, are balanced, and maintain audience engagement.	Media or materials sometimes distracts from audience engagement or the message.	Did not leverage media and materials for audience engagement or message delivery.
	Communication	<b>Delivery</b> <i>Communicates effectively to facilitate audience understanding of the topic.</i>	Elegant, sophisticated and articulate oral/written communication, facilitating audience understanding of the topic. Eye contact, gestures and body language are nuanced to enhance meaning and keep the audience engaged.	Oral and written communication is clear and effective in facilitating audience understanding of the topic. Eye contact, gestures, and body language convey meaning and help hold audience attention.	Oral and written communication is occasionally unclear and limits audience understanding of the topic. Eye contact, gestures, and body language hinder the audience's attention or meaning-making.	Oral and written communication is inappropriate and/or ineffective for facilitating audience understanding of the topic. Eye contact, gestures, and body language prevent the audience from understanding the message.
	Communication	<b>Organization</b> <i>Logically sequences and structures the presentation to maximize desired audience outcomes.</i>	Exceptional sequencing and/or innovative structure maximizes audience understanding.	Appropriate sequencing and structure facilitate audience understanding.	Lapses in sequencing and structure limit audience understanding.	Sequencing and structure prohibit audience understanding.
	Connection	<b>Reflection</b> <i>Connects the learning experience to the student's intellectual, personal, and/or professional development at UF and beyond.</i>	A thoughtful, profound, and insightful connection of the learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	A basic connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	A partial and incomplete connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	Provides a superficial connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

## UF Quest Rubric - Project

### Definition

A *project* is a planned undertaking; in undergraduate education, usually in the form of a response to a task or problem engaged in by students.

### Description and Use

This rubric has been designed for use in any UF Quest course in which a project is assigned, with the full understanding that not all UF Quest courses include assignments for projects. The Task Force developed the rubric with the assumption that the project assignment is appropriate for the UF Quest course and associated disciplines. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use to determine the degree to which students achieve the UF [Quest 1](#) and [Quest 2](#) student learning outcomes. The rubric presents the associated institutional outcomes for each criterion.

For the UF Quest institutional assessment, faculty translate their assessment of one or more selected student projects assigned in their course into the levels of achievement described in the rubric. The language in this rubric is intentionally broad and designed to be applied to multiple types of projects from a wide variety of assignments and disciplines. The first four criteria –relevance, synthesis, planning and execution, and dissemination – represent the universal components of projects undertaken in undergraduate education. The fifth criterion, reflection, is a unique component of UF Quest, where students connect their learning experience from the project assignment to their personal and professional growth at UF.

### Glossary

The definitions that follow clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric.

- *Audience*. A group for whom a work is developed and/or intended and to whom it is delivered.
- *Conclusions*. A synthesis of key findings drawn from research or evidence.
- *Integrate*. Connect to and/or synthesize the components of the work (e.g., materials, results, techniques, methods etc.) with course content knowledgeably and effectively.
- *Meaningful*. For an individual, that which is deemed important, worthwhile, significant, and/or purposeful.
- *Relevance*. The quality or state of being closely connected or appropriate.
- *Significant*. Of importance or consequence. In statistics, of or relating to observations that are unlikely to occur by chance and that therefore indicate a systematic cause.
- *Significant or challenging issue*. A social or disciplinary topic, problem or imperative that is important, relevant, and/or difficult.



### UF QUEST PROJECT RUBRIC

		4	3 (Target)	2	1
UF Quest Outcomes	Content	<b>Relevance</b> <i>Addresses a significant or challenging issue.</i>	The project defines clearly the question or challenge it addresses and supports its relevance with significant, compelling sources.	The project marginally defines the question or challenge it addresses and supports its relevance with minimal sources.	The project minimally addresses a question or challenge.
	Critical Thinking	<b>Synthesis</b> <i>Integrates findings with diverse sources to support conclusions.</i>	Data collection and analysis is significant. The project results are integrated meaningfully with the course content. Conclusions are clear and well supported with multiple worldviews, showing appreciation for diverse contributions.	Data collection and analysis is minimal. The project results are integrated marginally with the course content and conclusions are weak or supported by limited worldviews.	The data collected and analyzed is insufficient or missing. Disjointed representation of project findings with minimal reflection of impact at any level. Limited connection to or exploration of academic and community perspectives.
	Communication	<b>Planning and Execution</b> <i>Purpose and scope are relevant and addressed in an achievable development process and timeline.</i>	The project purpose and scope arise from a significant or challenging issue presented in the course. Project design is clear, sequential, and builds in regular review processes to ensure that it can be achieved within the time period allotted.	The project purpose and scope arise from an area marginally related to the course. Project design is weak, and the project timeline and/or sequence is questionable and may not lead to project completion.	The project purpose and scope are unrelated to the course. The project design is deeply flawed or incomplete. The project timeline will not lead to project completion.
	Communication	<b>Dissemination</b> <i>Prepares and shares findings and conclusions effectively.</i>	Project details and results are prepared for dissemination in multiple formats designed to reach class members and all interested audiences. Formats convey the project details, results and conclusions in creative, unique, and/or elegant ways.	Project details and results are prepared for dissemination in a format designed to reach the intended audience. Formats convey the project details, results, and conclusions in appropriate ways.	Dissemination format is ineffective for the intended audience. The format fails to convey the project details, results and conclusions.
	Connection	<b>Reflection</b> <i>Connects the learning experience to the student's intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.</i>	A thoughtful, profound, and insightful connection of the learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	A partial and incomplete connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	Provides a superficial connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

## UF Quest Rubric – Performance/Production

### Definition

A *performance/production* is a literary (e.g., story, poem, play, libretto, essay, critique) or artistic work (music, dance, drama, visual art, media), presented or exhibited to the public on stage, screen, or in a physical or digital space.

### Description and Use

This rubric has been designed for use in any UF Quest course in which a performance or production is assigned, with the full understanding that not all UF Quest courses include these types of assignments. The Task Force developed the rubric with the assumption that the performance/production assignment is appropriate for the UF Quest course and disciplines. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use to determine the degree to which students achieve the UF [Quest 1](#) and [Quest 2](#) student learning outcomes. The rubric presents the associated institutional outcomes for each criterion.

For the UF Quest institutional assessment, faculty translate their assessment of one or more selected student performances/productions into the levels of achievement described in the rubric. The language in this rubric is intentionally broad and designed to be applied to multiple types of performances/productions from a wide variety of assignments and disciplines. The criteria –components, creativity, interpretation, and delivery – represent the universal components of performances and productions in undergraduate education. The fifth criterion, reflection, is a unique component of UF Quest, where students connect their learning experience from the performance/production assignment to their personal and professional growth at UF.

### Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric.

- *Audience*. A group for whom a work is intended and to whom it is presented.
- *Audience experience*. The cognitive and affective responses that evoke from the interactions between audience members and performers during or as a result of a performance or production.
- *Compelling*. Evoking interest, attention, admiration, or respect with a powerful or irresistible effect.
- *Conclusion*. A synthesis of key findings or experiences drawn from observation, research, or evidence.
- *Intention*. What the creator of a work plans and/or expects a work to evoke or mean to an audience.
- *Innovative*. That which is imaginative, new, original and the process of turning it into reality.
- *Integrate*. Connect to and/or synthesize the components of the work (e.g., materials, results, techniques, methods etc.) with course content knowledgeably and effectively.
- *Learning experience*. Any interaction or engagement with the UF Quest delivered curriculum in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic or nontraditional settings.
- *Meaning*. An important, worthwhile quality of implied or explicit significance.
- *Purpose*. The reason for or aim of a work.
- *Transformational*. Refers to experiences, ideas, products, etc. that lead to a significant change.



### UF QUEST PERFORMANCE/PRODUCTION RUBRIC

		Criteria	4	3 (Target)	2	1
UF Quest Outcomes	Content	<b>Components</b> <i>Uses appropriate components to evoke and elevate the audience experience.</i>	The performance/production intentionally, skillfully and knowledgeably integrates well-chosen, appropriate components that lead to a compelling audience experience.	The performance/production knowledgeably integrates specific components that lead to the intended audience experience.	The performance/production shows knowledge of performance/production components, but inconsistently integrates and implements the components, diminishing the effectiveness of the intended audience experience.	The performance/production shows little knowledge of performance/production components. Specific components necessary to evoke the intended audience experience are not effectively integrated or implemented. The effectiveness of the performance/production is lost or significantly diminished.
	Critical Thinking	<b>Creativity</b> <i>Displays innovative or transformational ideas, formats, or solutions about the topic.</i>	The performance/production displays innovative and transformational ideas, formats, or solutions about the topic that lead to a compelling and effective audience experience.	The performance/production displays innovative and transformational ideas, formats, or solutions about the topic that lead to an effective audience experience.	The performance/production uses conventional ideas, format, or solutions about the topic, diminishing the audience experience.	The performance/production uses borrowed or unoriginal ideas, formats, and solutions about the topic, leading to a significantly diminished audience experience.
	Communication	<b>Interpretation</b> <i>Conveys intended meaning and purpose.</i>	The performance/production is focused, coherent, compelling, and effectively conveys the performer/producer's meaning and purpose.	The performance/production is focused, coherent, and conveys the performer/producer's meaning and purpose effectively.	The focus of the performance/production wavers and diminishes the performer/producer's meaning and purpose because of periodic incoherence.	The performance/production is incoherent and lacks focus. The performer/producer's meaning and purpose are lost or so significantly diminished that they are imperceptible.
	Communication	<b>Delivery</b> <i>Uses media, tools, materials, and/or technology effectively to maximize delivery.</i>	The performance/production fully engages the audience using media, tools, materials, and technology appropriately and intentionally integrated to create a compelling audience experience.	The performance/production engages the audience using media, tools, materials, and technology to create an effective audience experience.	The performance/production engages the audience inconsistently. Media, tools, materials, and technology are used in a manner that diminishes the audience experience.	The performance/production fails to engage the audience. Media, tools, materials and technology are misused or so ineffective that the audience experience is significantly diminished.
	Connection	<b>Reflection</b> <i>Connects the learning experience to the student's intellectual, personal, and/or professional development at UF and beyond.</i>	A thoughtful, profound, and insightful connection of the learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	A basic connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	A partial and incomplete connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.	Provides a superficial connection of the student's learning experience to previous learning and/or the student's intellectual, personal, and professional growth.



## UF Quest Rubric – Reflection

### Definition

A *reflection* is a written or recorded statement arising from serious thought, consideration, examination, and/or exploration of how the writer has changed, developed, or grown from experience or interaction with some subject matter, idea, or purpose. For UF Quest, reflections describe how student's *lived* curriculum (what has been learned to date) and the student's experience with the *delivered* curriculum (the UF Quest course) connects to their future plans and goals (adapted from Yancey, 1998). Essential to the reflection process is *meaning-making* - the process of how people construe, understand, or make sense of life events, relationships, and the self. Ignelzi (2002, December 15) advises: "Meaning-making, the process of how individuals make sense of knowledge, experience, relationships, and the self, must be considered in designing college curricular environments supportive of learning and development." (p. 5).

### Description and Use

This rubric has been designed for use in any UF Quest courses. The Task Force developed the rubric with the assumption that the reflection assignment is appropriate for the course learning experiences. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use to determine the degree to which students achieve the UF [Quest 1](#) and [Quest 2](#) student learning outcomes. The rubric presents the associated institutional outcomes for each criterion.

For the UF Quest institutional assessment, faculty translate their assessment of one or more selected student reflections assigned in their course into the levels of achievement described in the rubric. The language in this rubric is intentionally broad and designed to be applied to reflections from a wide variety of assignments and disciplines. The criteria address the four SLO areas for UF Quest – content, critical thinking, communication, and connection.

### Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric.

- *Audience*. A group for whom a work is developed and/or intended and to whom it is delivered.
- *Delivered curriculum*. The curriculum that is planned and taught by the faculty. Adapted from Yancey, K. B. (1998).
- *Learning experience*. Delivered curriculum topics about the human condition and/or society challenges.
- *Life relevance*. Occurs when learning experiences are connected in some way to real-world issues, problems, and contexts.
- *Lived curriculum*. The total of what students have learned to date. Adapted from Yancey, K. B. (1998).
- *Meaning-making*. How individuals make sense of knowledge, experience, relationships, and the self. (Ignelzi, M., 2002, December 15).
- *Personal relevance*. Occurs when learning is connected to an individual student's interests, aspirations, and life experiences.
- *Personal understanding*. The result of an individual's assimilation of learning experiences in the context of their prior learning, personal history, and personal development.
- *Relevance*. The quality or state of being closely connected or appropriate.



### UF QUEST REFLECTION RUBRIC

		Criteria	4	3 (Target)	2	1
UF Quest Outcomes	Content	<b>Content</b> <i>Describes and explains the learning experience.</i>	A detailed and thorough description and explanation of the learning experience.	A basic explanation of the learning experience.	A partial description of the learning experience.	An inconsistent or contradictory description of the learning experience.
	Critical Thinking	<b>Critical Thinking</b> <i>Analyzes, evaluates, and synthesizes the learning experience to advance personal understanding.</i>	An insightful and perceptive analysis of the learning experience and its value to the student's personal and professional growth.	A basic analysis of the learning experience and its value to the student's personal and professional growth.	A minimal and/or indifferent analysis of the learning experience and its value to the student's personal and professional growth.	A superficial and/or disengaged analysis of the learning experience and its value to the student's personal and professional growth.
	Communication	<b>Communication</b> <i>Clearly and respectfully conveys the meaning and relevance of the learning experience.</i>	A clear, compelling, respectful, and effective communication of the meaning of the experience in a manner that intentionally conveys the significance and relevance of the experience.	A respectful and effective communication about the experience in a manner that conveys the general significance and relevance.	A basic communication of the meaning of the experience in manner that minimally conveys the significance and relevance of the experience.	A disorganized communication of the meaning of the experience in a manner that conveys unclearly or misrepresents the significance and relevance of the experience.
	Connection	<b>Connection</b> <i>Connects the course learning experiences to life and personal relevance and meaning-making.</i>	A thoughtful, profound, and insightful connection of the student's course learning experiences to personal and life relevance and meaning-making.	A basic connection of the student's course learning experiences to personal and life relevance and meaning-making.	A partial and incomplete connection student's course learning experiences to personal and life relevance and meaning-making.	Provides a superficial connection student's course learning experiences to personal and life relevance and meaning-making.



## The UF Quest Assessment Task Force

First name	Last name	Department	College	Email
Erik	Black	Pediatrics	Medicine	<a href="mailto:ewblack@ufl.edu">ewblack@ufl.edu</a>
Shaun	Boren	Director, Assessment and Research	Division of Student Affairs	<a href="mailto:sboren@ufsa.ufl.edu">sboren@ufsa.ufl.edu</a>
Elayne	Colon	Assessment and Accreditation	Education	<a href="mailto:epcolon@coe.ufl.edu">epcolon@coe.ufl.edu</a>
Laura	Ellis	School of Music	Arts	<a href="mailto:lellis@arts.ufl.edu">lellis@arts.ufl.edu</a>
Robyn	Goodman	Advertising	Journalism and Communications	<a href="mailto:rgoodman@jou.ufl.edu">rgoodman@jou.ufl.edu</a>
George	Hack	Occupational Therapy; Instructional Design	Public Health and Health Professions	<a href="mailto:hackg@phhp.ufl.edu">hackg@phhp.ufl.edu</a>
Heather	Maness	Instructional Design	Center for Instructional Technology and Training	<a href="mailto:htdaniel@ufl.edu">htdaniel@ufl.edu</a>
Corinne	Huggins-Manley	Research and Evaluation Methodology	Education	<a href="mailto:amanley@coe.ufl.edu">amanley@coe.ufl.edu</a>
Kryriaki	Kaplanidou	Sport Management	Health and Human Performance	<a href="mailto:kkaplanidou@hhp.ufl.edu">kkaplanidou@hhp.ufl.edu</a>
Swapna	Kumar	Educational Technology	Education	<a href="mailto:swapnakumar@coe.ufl.edu">swapnakumar@coe.ufl.edu</a>
John	Mendoza-Garcia	Engineering Education	Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering	<a href="mailto:jmendozagarcia@ufl.edu">jmendozagarcia@ufl.edu</a>
David	Miller	School of Human Development and Organizational Studies	Education	<a href="mailto:dmiller@coe.ufl.edu">dmiller@coe.ufl.edu</a>
Joann	Mossa	Geography	Liberal Arts and Sciences	<a href="mailto:mossa@ufl.edu">mossa@ufl.edu</a>
Richard	Nolan	Political Science	Liberal Arts and Sciences	<a href="mailto:rnolan@ufl.edu">rnolan@ufl.edu</a>
Karen	Reed	Biobehavioral Nursing Science	Nursing	<a href="mailto:ksreed@ufl.edu">ksreed@ufl.edu</a>
Robert	Ries	Building Construction	Design, Construction, and Planning	<a href="mailto:rries@ufl.edu">rries@ufl.edu</a>
Amy	Simonne	Food Scientist	Agricultural and Life Sciences	<a href="mailto:asim@ufl.edu">asim@ufl.edu</a>
Laura	Spears	Director of Assessment	George A. Smathers Libraries	<a href="mailto:laura.spears@ufl.edu">laura.spears@ufl.edu</a>
Aaron	Thomas	Principal Data Scientist	Enterprise Analytics and Reporting	<a href="mailto:aorthomas@ufl.edu">aorthomas@ufl.edu</a>
Andrew	Wolpert	Director, UF Quest	Liberal Arts and Sciences	<a href="mailto:wolpert@ufl.edu">wolpert@ufl.edu</a>

*Note.* We are also grateful for the contributions of instructional designer Allyson Haskell, who served the task force in fall 2019.



# Exploring Experiential Learning for UF Quest 3





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# Welcome Message



**Dr. Angela Lindner**

Associate Provost for Undergraduate  
Affairs and Associate Professor,  
Dept. of Environmental Engineering

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural UF Quest 3 Experiential Learning Faculty Learning Community! UF Quest is an ambitious program that asks students to consider why the world is the way it is and what they can do about the problems confronting us. UF Quest promotes a high level of faculty engagement in undergraduate students and expects every faculty member to serve as a model of excellence in teaching for their colleagues.

With the successful implementation of UF Quest 1 and UF Quest 2, we are now planning to make UF Quest 3 a university-wide requirement in the coming years. UF Quest 3 will involve a substantial semester-long experiential learning (EL) journey under the heading “Engagement in the World.” This will build on what students have learned in their previous UF Quest courses. While UF Quest 1 and UF Quest 2 are primarily courses that take place in traditional classroom settings, all of those courses are also required to have an EL component. Students entering UF Quest 3 then will be well prepared to engage in a wide range of opportunities provided by our faculty. Your participation will be a key element in the success of UF Quest 3, and we greatly appreciate your time and dedication to undergraduate education at the University of Florida.



# What Is UF Quest?



**Dr. Andrew Wolpert**

Director of UF Quest and Associate  
Professor of Classics

UF Quest is a shared, sequential, general education program for all first-time-in-college UF students that accompanies them in their growth and maturity throughout their entire undergraduate experience. Through a combination of coursework in the humanities, biological and physical sciences, and social and behavioral sciences and experiential learning activities, UF Quest engages students in the multifaceted problems of this complex and interconnected world and challenges them to discover where they can best apply their gifts to advance solutions. UF Quest provides a uniform opportunity for all students to enhance their ability to communicate effectively, think critically, solve problems, and reflect deeply. It is a vehicle and model for instilling the fundamental values of education that UF espouses and to which all in UF should aspire to achieve.



# UF Quest 3 Overview



**Dr. Rick (John Richard) Stepp**

Director of UF Quest 3 and Professor of Anthropology

As Director of UF Quest 3, Rick is spearheading the creation of the first Quest 3 Faculty Learning Community and will serve as moderator and organizer of several of the workshops in this series. Dr. Stepp is Professor of Anthropology and a core faculty member in the Tropical Conservation and Development Program. In addition to his work on implementing UF Quest 3 across 14 colleges and schools, he is actively involved in community outreach and international education opportunities for students. Quest 3 will entail a semester long experiential learning requirement for all undergraduates under the heading “Engagement in the World.” The overall purpose is to ensure students engage in specific, real-world activities that facilitate their personal and professional development. Activities will fall under one of five broad categories: internships or co-ops, study abroad, community/public service, undergraduate research, or design competition.



# UF Quest 3 Overview

## UF QUEST



### QUEST 1

Engagement with Essential Questions from the Humanities

(Choose one course from the following themes)

THE EXAMINED LIFE

IDENTITIES

JUSTICE & POWER

NATURE & CULTURE

WAR & PEACE

UF QUEST 1  
WILDCARD



### QUEST 2

Engagement with Pressing Questions in the Natural and Social Sciences

(Choose one course from the following subject areas)

SOCIAL AND  
BEHAVIORAL  
SCIENCES

BIOLOGICAL  
SCIENCES

PHYSICAL SCIENCES



### QUEST 3

Engagement in the World  
(Choose one experience)

INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP

RESEARCH

PUBLIC SERVICE

STUDY ABROAD

COMMUNITY  
SERVICE

DESIGN AND  
COMPETITION



### QUEST 4

Synthesis of UF Quest Experience with Discipline  
(optional)

SENIOR CAPSTONE



# Center for Teaching Excellence

UF's Center for Teaching Excellence promotes student success through transformative learning environments. We invite instructors and graduate students to connect with us, explore innovative strategies, and share best practices that support quality and inclusive teaching for the benefit of all students.



# UF International Center

Providing global experiential learning opportunities for students is at the core of UFIC's programmatic initiatives. The UF International Center provides advising and administrative support for the 2,000 students who study, research, intern, and conduct service learning abroad in locations around the world. Through the Peace Corps Prep and International Scholars Programs, students engage in global experiential learning on campus and abroad and develop the skills to effectively navigate international contexts and become global citizens. UFIC staff also provide administrative support for thousands of international undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, UFIC runs multiple programs to support faculty in the creation of global experiential learning opportunities such as course-embedded virtual exchange modules and innovative study abroad programs.

UFIC is excited to collaborate with UF Quest on this workshop series and looks forward to supporting new global experiential learning opportunities that are meaningful, transformative, and accessible to all UF undergraduate students under Quest 3.



# Schedule

## Workshop 1

### **Orientation, Opening Session & Teaching through Oral Histories**

Thursday, September 1 | 2:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: The Center for Teaching Excellence  
202 Bryant Space Science Center

## Workshop 2

### **International Virtual Exchange**

Thursday, September 8 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: Online via Zoom

## Workshop 3

### **Experiential Learning at the Museums**

Thursday, September 15 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: The Harn Museum & the Florida Museum of Natural History

## Workshop 4

### **Undergraduate Research & Library Resources**

Thursday, September 22 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: Smathers Libraries, Room 100

## Workshop 5

### **Internships**

Thursday, October 6 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: Career Connections Center  
Exploration Room (Reitz Union)



# Schedule

## Workshop 6

### **Service Learning: Gainesville and Beyond**

Thursday, October 13 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: FIBER at the Ayers Building,  
Suite 105 720 SW 2nd Ave. Gainesville, FL 32601

## Workshop 7

### **International Experiential Learning**

Thursday, October 20 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: UF International Center  
Large Conference Room (HUB)

## Workshop 8

### **Design Competitions & Project Based Learning**

Thursday, October 27 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: UF International Center  
Large Conference Room (HUB)

## Workshop 9

### **Volunteering**

Thursday, November 17 | 12:00-2:30pm EDT

Location: Bob Graham Center, O'Neill Reading room (Puhl Hall)

## Workshop 10

### **Faculty Symposium**

Thursday, December 1 | 3:00-4:30pm EDT

Location: Smathers 100



# Meet Your Facilitators



Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey  
Assistant Director,  
Center For Teaching Excellence

Dr. Alexandra Bitton-Bailey discovered her passion for teaching in 1998 as a graduate student instructor. She has been teaching ever since. She joined the Center for Teaching Excellence in 2015. Since then, she has worked closely to support excellence in teaching and learning across the University of Florida. She works on a wide variety of initiatives and projects including the Passport to Great Teaching, Pathways to Online Teaching Excellence, Interface, First Year Faculty Teaching Academy, Faculty Learning Communities, the Teaching Beyond the Podium Podcast Series, and the Inspired Teaching Newsletter. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Florida in Higher Education Administration, her M.A. in Romance Language Linguistics from the University of Florida, her M.S from Florida State University in Information and Library Science, and her B.A. in History and Anthropology from the University of Florida.



# Meet Your Facilitators



**Paloma Rodriguez**

Director of Office of Global Learning,  
UF International Center

Paloma Rodriguez is the Director of the Office of Global Learning at the University of Florida International Center, where she leads faculty professional development programs to support curriculum internationalization, including UF's COIL/ Virtual Exchange initiative and the Global Learning Institute. In addition, she oversees undergraduate programming such as the International Scholars and Peace Corps Prep programs, and the assessment of several internationalization initiatives. She had a leading role in the implementation of the University of Florida Quality Enhancement Plan "Learning Without Borders: Internationalizing the Gator Nation" (2014-2019) and continues to manage the programs created under this plan.



# Teaching through Oral Histories

Thursday, September 1, 2:00-4:30 EDT

Engaging in the recording of oral histories makes students more empathetic and culturally aware. This session offers examples of hands-on oral history projects faculty have implemented in their courses. Participants will learn about the resources available at the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program.



# Panelists

Kathryn Dwyer-Navajas  
Senior Lecturer of Spanish  
Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese Studies  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Kathryn Dwyer-Navajas engages her students in an oral history project that involves interviewing members of the community and documenting their migration experience. The students then work on the production of a short film. Dwyer-Navajas has been a senior lecturer in Spanish at the University of Florida since 2010, and for the previous 11 years served at the University as lecturer, visiting lecturer, and adjunct instructor in Spanish. She holds a B.A. in Spanish from the University of Florida and an M.A. in Hispanic and Italian Studies from Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Ingrid Kleespies  
Associate Professor of Russian  
Dept. of Languages, Literatures and Cultures  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Dr. Ingrid Kleespies is Associate Professor of Russian Studies. She received her B.A. in Slavic Studies from Harvard University and M.A. and Ph.D. in Slavic Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. Her areas of interest include Russian Romanticism, Russian intellectual history, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian literature and culture, and literature of travel and empire more generally.

Jeffrey Pufahl  
Research Assistant Professor  
Center for Arts in Medicine  
College of the Arts



In collaboration with the Harn Museum of Art and Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, Jeffrey Pufahl led a project exploring how national themes in the artwork of African-American painter and printmaker Jacob Lawrence can be connected to the history of local communities and creative inclusive spaces in museums. He completed the UF International Center's Virtual Exchange Training in 2021 and is a past participant of the Global Learning Institute. Pufahl's work at UF is a combination of teaching applied theater, directing and producing health related theater and film projects, community engaged research/research translation, and health communication.

Deborah Hendrix  
Digital Humanities Production Coordinator  
Samuel Proctor Oral History Program  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Deborah Hendrix is an archivist and videographer with extensive experience in oral history projects. She assists faculty and students with their oral history projects and video production needs. Hendrix joined the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program in 2000 as a volunteer and a staff member in 2014. She holds an Associate of Arts degree in Graphic Design and History from Santa Fe College and a Bachelor's degree in History from UF. Her professional interests include graphic design and digital film production.



# International Virtual Exchange

Thursday, September 8, 3:00-4:30 EDT

Virtual exchange connects faculty and students across borders. This session features a panel of faculty who have developed global classrooms by connecting their students to peers and experts around the world. Participants will learn about virtual exchange resources available at the UF International Center.



# Panelists

**Eric Esterline**  
Senior Lecturer and Director  
Dept. of Sports Journalism and Communication  
College of Journalism and Communications



Eric Esterline instructs a wide range of courses, including RTV 4930: Communicating Soccer Globally, which is offered as part of the International Scholars Program. This course includes a virtual exchange module in which UF students collaborate and engage with students at the University of Brighton in the UK. Esterline also oversees the Sport Management Internship program and holds an appointment for the College of Health and Human Performance in sport management.

**Carrie Martins**  
Coordinator, Virtual Exchange Initiatives  
UF International Center



Carrie Martins began working as Coordinator, Virtual Exchange Initiatives in the UF International Center (UFIC) in July 2022. Previously, she worked in Penn State University's Office of Global Programs, first with international student programming and support, then as an education abroad advisor. Carrie also has experience working with students in Brazil and is fluent in Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese. She is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies at UF.

Megan Mocko

Lecturer

Dept. of Information Systems and Operations Management

Warrington College of Business



Megan Mocko teaches statistics to undergraduate and graduate students in the Warrington College of Business. Previously, she taught statistics in the UF Department of Statistics since 2001 and achieved Master Lecturer in 2013. In the undergraduate class, they have worked on comparing time series of closing values in the stock market for three companies with students in Colombia or worked on problem sets with students in Ecuador. For the graduate level class, one term, they have worked on creating a survey about happiness and created data visualizations with students in Scotland. These opportunities have allowed students to practice communicating about data across borders and have given them practice in communicating in preparation for the global marketplace.

Dr. Diba Mani

Instructional Assistant Professor

Dept. of Applied Physiology & Kinesiology

College of Health and Human Performance



Dr. Diba Mani is passionate about internationalizing her courses through the use of active and experiential learning, such as virtual exchange. She completed the International Center's Virtual Exchange Training in 2019 and is a past participant of the Global Learning Institute. She often presents at global learning conferences on her internationalization strategies. Dr. Mani holds a Ph.D. in Integrative Physiology: Neurophysiology, an M.S. in Integrative Physiology, a B.A. in Integrative Physiology, and a B.A. in Asian Studies: Middle East, Farsi, from the University of Colorado, Boulder<sup>165</sup>-



# Experiential Learning at the Museums

Thursday, September 15, 3:00-4:30 EDT

The UF Museums are fabulous venues for experiential learning. This workshop and guided visit to the Harn Museum and the Florida Museum will help faculty discover valuable resources for projects and out-of-the-classroom experiences for their students.



# Panelists

Darcie MacMahon  
Director of Exhibits and  
Public Programs  
Florida Museum of Natural History



Darcie MacMahon oversees everything related to the public experience, from exhibitions to educational programs. She serves multiple audiences through developing collaborative partnerships and innovative initiatives. Trained as an archaeologist, she has been involved in numerous excavations and has directed several collections improvement projects. She headed the team that created the first permanent exhibit in the Museum's Hall of South Florida People and Environments, working with curator Bill Marquardt.

Dr. Eric Segal  
Director of Education and Curator of  
Academic Programs  
Harn Museum of Art



Dr. Eric Segal collaborates with faculty across all units of the university to foster interdisciplinary programs and to develop creative ways to join the museum with curricular activities. These include tours, museum assignments, experiential visits and other program activities. He also leads the Education team in developing engaging programming for exhibitions, learning opportunities for college students and for preK-12 students, "always-on" educational experiences for all, and outreach activities that connect with the broader community. He holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of California, Los Angeles.



# Undergraduate Research & Library Resources

Thursday, September 22, 3:00-4:30 EDT

Engaging in undergraduate research helps students apply knowledge and improves their overall engagement. In this session, faculty will share their experiences with mentoring undergraduate students. Participants will learn ways to collaborate with the Center for Undergraduate Research.



# Panelists

**Dr. Anthony Auletta**

Lecturer

Dept. of Entomology and Nematology

Institute of Food and Agricultural  
Sciences



Dr. Anthony Auletta is a lecturer in the Entomology & Nematology Department at the University of Florida, where he teaches a variety of courses in introductory insect biology, spider biology, and insect behavior. A core component of his teaching program are course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs), which bridge the gap between the classroom and laboratory by providing students with an authentic research experience as part of their structured coursework. Dr. Auletta holds a Ph.D. in Entomology from the University of Minnesota, an M.S. in Biology from Western Carolina University, and a B.S. in Entomology from Cornell University.

Dr. Anne Donnelly  
Director  
Center for Undergraduate Research



Dr. Anne Donnelly holds a B.A. in Biology, an MBA in Finance and a Ph.D. in Education and Curriculum, the latter from the University of Florida. She has over 30 years of professional experience in the field of education as both a teacher and administrator including her current position as Director of the UF Center for Undergraduate Research. As the founding Director of the center, she has developed a one-stop-shop for students of all disciplines who are interested in undergraduate research. In recognition of her efforts encouraging and supporting students from diverse backgrounds, in 2015 she received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring from President Barack Obama at a ceremony in the Oval Office of the White House.

Dr. GiNESSa Mahar  
Anthropology Librarian  
Laboratory of Southeastern  
Archaeology  
George A. Smathers Library



While working at the museum, Dr. GiNESSa Mahar completed her M.A., which focused on two Late Archaic (5800-3200 cal yr B.P.) shell ring sites on St. Catherines Island, GA. Her thesis involved the comparison of the two rings using geophysical survey, analysis, and excavation. Her study showed that appropriate geophysical testing can add insightful information that could be missed through excavation alone. This research

inspired an interest in the settlement patterns and landscape usage of Late Archaic and Early Woodland hunter-gatherer populations along the southeast coast. Dr. Mahar has been able to continue her interest in southeastern coastal archaeology through the Lower Suwannee Archaeological Survey, a part of the Laboratory of Southeastern Archaeology. Her dissertation focuses on the ancient fishing technologies employed along the Florida Gulf Coast.

Dr. Monika Oli  
Master Lecturer  
Dept. of Microbiology & Cell Science  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences



Dr. Monika Oli is an Undergraduate Coordinator and advises students on long term planning, questions about microbiology and related careers, 4+1 programs and post-bac opportunities. Dr. Oli is passionate about fostering creativity, sharing her enthusiasm for microbiology and everything related to it, and is a mentor for her students no matter what questions or concerns they may have. For online students Dr. Oli developed a condensed hybrid-bootcamp laboratory to provide hands-on experimental experiences. She believes that undergraduate teaching assistants (UTAs) for microbiology labs fulfill a unique and essential role to make the creative experiential learning a very unique experience. The UTAs assist the graduate teaching assistants to learn hands-on microbiology lab skills and significantly aid in the facilitation of a CURE experience in the microbiology lab.



# Internships

Thursday, October 6, 3:00-4:30 EDT

This session offers a variety of internship models and provides information about the management and structure of these learning opportunities. Faculty will tour the Career Connections Center and learn about the resources available for faculty and students.



# Panelists

## Ryan Braun

Associate Director of the Academic Advising Center and Director of Beyond120  
Academic Advising Center  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Ryan Braun is the Director of the Beyond120 Program for Career Readiness and Experiential Learning in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In this capacity, he oversees and develops professional development programs for undergraduates related to internships, study abroad, research, mentorship, and career curriculum. Braun and his team frequently partner with organizations to establish internship opportunities for undergraduates, develop internship curricula to maximize student engagement, build recruitment pipelines, and establish best practices for internship programs.

## Dr. Holly Moses

Instructional Assistance Professor and  
Internship Coordinator  
Dept. of Health Education & Behavior  
College of Health and Human Performance



Dr. Holly Moses received her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the College of Education at the University of Florida in 2013. A Master Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES), Dr. Moses holds both a master's degree in health science education,

as well as a bachelor's degree in health science education from the University of Florida. Dr. Moses is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Health Education and Behavior (HEB) and serves as the internship coordinator for the HEB undergraduate degree program. Dr. Moses' primary research and instructional areas of interest include: professional preparation and career development for health education majors; health education advocacy; foundations of health education and health promotion; community health; school health; child/adolescent health issues; bullying and cyberbullying; hazing and victimization.

Keira Simmonds

Associate Director for Experiential  
Learning & Campus Inclusion  
Career Connections Center



Keira Simmonds is the Associate Director for Experiential Learning and Campus Inclusion at the UF Career Connections Center. In her role, she leads initiatives to support students, industry, and campus partners in their pursuit of experiential learning opportunities and connections. The team she oversees works to ensure career services is inclusive to all students as they develop relevant competencies that position them to be competitive in a global workforce.



# Service Learning: Gainesville and Beyond

Thursday, October 13, 3:00-4:30 EDT

As a land grant institution, community outreach and service is an essential part of the UF mission. This workshop will host experts from UF and Gainesville with experience in working in communities (especially East Gainesville) and provide ideas and best practices for successful collaboration.



# Panelists

Carrie Blanchard Bush  
Chief of Staff to the Chief Operating  
Officer at the University of Florida



A native Floridian, Carrie Blanchard Bush has worked in the fields of local government, economic development, and higher education for the past 15 years. During that time, she has served in several roles, including as Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Tallahassee, the Director of Research and Public Policy for the Florida Chamber Foundation and as an Assistant Professor in Public Administration at Appalachian State University. Currently, Carrie serves as the Chief of Staff to the Chief Operating Officer at the University of Florida, where she is responsible for leading and aligning administrative projects.

Carrie received a Bachelor of Arts in business administration from the University of Miami, a Master of Public Administration from the University of Miami, and a doctorate in public administration from Florida State University. Carrie is an active member of the Gainesville community, including serving as a member of the Alachua County Public Schools Half Cent Tax Oversight Committee and the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area Advisory Board.

Jeffrey Carney  
Associate Professor and Director, FIBER  
School of Architecture  
College of Design, Construction and Planning



Jeffrey Carney is a registered architect and certified urban planner working at the interface of housing, neighborhoods, and ecosystems, with a focus on climate change adaptation. His work in Florida is focused on the resilience of communities achieved through transdisciplinary and community engaged design processes. Current projects include projects to assist the Cities of Port St. Joe, Jacksonville, and Cedar Key to balance health, environment, and housing needs in the face of increased climate change risk. Additionally, he is spearheading the GulfSouth Studio initiative sponsored by the National Academies of Science Gulf Research Program to connect community engagement, advanced computation tools, and coastal resilience in the Florida Gulf through studio design education.

Jonathan Leslie  
Executive Director  
Project YouthBuild

Project YouthBuild is an organization in Gainesville that supports youth from low-income backgrounds who have previously left school to continue their education and give back to the community. They recently partnered with the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at UF to guide Project YouthBuild alumni in performing research on parental incarceration.



# International Experiential Learning

Thursday, October 20, 3:00-4:30 EDT

Global learning experiences foster adaptability and intercultural skills. This panel overviews different modalities of global experiential learning such as research, internships, service learning, and study abroad. Participants will learn about professional development opportunities, funding, and resources available through UF International Center to create global experiences for students.



# Panelists

Dr. Brian Harfe  
Senior Assistant Provost for Teaching  
and Technology and Professor and  
Associate Dean  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Dr. Brian Harfe is a Professor in the UF College of Medicine, Associate Dean of Research (ADR) and Associate Dean for the Natural Sciences and Mathematics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Senior Assistant Provost for Teaching and Technology in the Office of the Provost. He earned a B.S. degree from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and strongly believes that students should spend time abroad as part of their education. In CLAS, he is responsible for all research, online activities, international activities including study abroad and exchanges, and the seven science and math departments. He currently directs 14 international exchange programs, which he developed, with universities in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Israel, and Australia, and a week-long study abroad program in the UK. In his field of developmental biology, he has published >100 papers, which have been cited >19,000 times (h-index 65). His research has been funded by both private and public agencies, and he has won numerous awards for undergraduate and medical student teaching.

Dr. Timothy Murtha

Professor

Dept. of Landscape Architecture, FIBER

College of Design, Construction and Planning



Dr. Timothy Murtha holds a joint appointment with the College of Design, Construction and Planning and the Center for Latin American Studies. He is an anthropologist, landscape archaeologist and design educator with over twenty years of research studying settlement patterns and landscape history in the lowlands of Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. He is a founding faculty member of the Florida Institute of Built Environment Resilience, and his research investigates the coupled natural human systems dynamics of settlement and land use, relying on advanced geospatial tools. Dr. Murtha studied at the University of Central Florida, before completing his MA and Ph.D. in Anthropology from the Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Murtha has conducted sponsored interdisciplinary research in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, as well as participating in research in Northern Europe and North America.

Jason Ward

Director of International Programs

Heavener School of Business

Warrington College of Business



Jason Ward is the Director of International Programs in the Heavener School of Business where he oversees Heavener's seven signature study abroad programs and 27 international exchange partnerships with universities in Europe, Asia, South

America, and Australia. Jason Ward coordinates programs for incoming/outgoing international students, serves as the faculty advisor for the Global Business Society, and has led internship programs in China, Vietnam, and South Korea. Jason He became a Qualified Administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) in 2020 and has used the instrument in programs with over 250 students. He strives to help students have experiences that will help them act appropriately, effectively, and authentically across cultural difference.

Dr. Marta Wayne  
Dean and Associate Provost  
International Center



Dr. Marta Wayne is a professor of Biology and the newly-appointed Dean of the UF International Center. She specializes in the evolution & ecology of infectious disease and evolutionary genetics. Dr. Wayne's research has taken her to Mexico to work with a collaborator studying the monarch butterfly migration and to spend a sabbatical with a collaborator in Canada working on infectious disease. She also co-developed a new study abroad program, UF in Cusco. The UF in Cusco Experiential Learning for the Health Professions program was co-developed and is co-administered by the Departments of Spanish & Portuguese Languages and the Department of Biology. As part of the program, students live with host families and are placed in clinical healthcare settings where they volunteer for four hours per week. They also take two UF courses: Spanish in the Community and Infectious Disease in the Americas. Both courses provide opportunities for the students to share and reflect upon what they are learning as part of their clinic placements and require them to ask questions of their host families related to infectious disease.



# Design Competitions & Project Based Learning

Thursday, October 27, 3:00-4:30 EDT

Design competitions help to honor students' talent and innovative thinking and showcase emerging professionals while problem-based learning allows students to acquire a deeper knowledge through active exploration of real-world challenges and problems. Participants will explore different options for design competitions and problem-based learning from experienced faculty as well as learn about the various resources available to support these endeavors.



# Panelists

Dr. Edward Latorre-Navarro  
Associate Engineer and Director of the  
Integrated Product and Process Design  
Program  
Dept. of Engineering Education  
Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering



Dr. Edward Latorre-Navarro joins UF from his previous role as Associate Professor of Computer Science at the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo (UPRA). Driven by his passion for mentoring and maximizing the potential of his students, he led a mobile development research laboratory with the mission of providing technological solutions for UPRA and the STEM academic community, through improving the effectiveness of the academic teaching experience based on student engagement with educational goals. His teaching philosophy employs many ideas from the concepts of flipped classrooms, project-based courses, effort-based grading and minimizing traditional exams. Edward has also taught graduate computer science courses and is a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) in Puerto Rico.

Dr. Matthew Traum  
Instructional Associate Professor  
Dept. of Mechanical & Aerospace  
Engineering Herbert Wertheim College of  
Engineering



As PI of UF's new GatorKits Laboratory, Matt Dr. Matthew Traum brings hands-on engineering laboratory learning to remote students and international collaborators through hands-on kits. Matt He oversees the creation, development, testing, deployment, and assessment of inexpensive educational STEM lab kits that provide access to multiple engineering disciplines. Research conducted by Matt and others shows kits provide higher levels of student engagement, learning, outcome achievement, and attitude than do brick-and-mortar labs. Plus, kits provide measurement quality and fidelity exceeding brick-and-mortar learning labs, which the kits can fully replace for any engineering course. Voted the "most innovative Florida public university response to the COVID pandemic" by 2021 Florida Online Innovation Summit delegates, UF's GatorKits Laboratory kits are useful for remote, in-person, and hybrid instruction. They also provide institutional resilience for continued instruction through natural disasters and pandemics. Moreover, they enable novel teaching modalities including joint Virtual Exchange lab courses with international collaborators where students at partner institutions across the world work together using the same hardware despite physical distance.



# Volunteering

Thursday, November 17, 3:00-4:30 EDT

This session will introduce participants to the wide range of opportunities available to students interested in volunteering. UF has considerable resources and infrastructure in place to facilitate these opportunities and some of the UF leaders of these initiatives will present their work.



# Panelists

**Dr. Kevin Bird**  
Instructor and Experiential Learning  
Coordinator  
Bob Graham Center for Public Service  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Dr. Kevin Bird works with students selected for the Gainesville City Government, Tallahassee Internship and Washington Internship programs. Dr. Bird has guided students' experiential learning as a part of his advising and student support in UF's Department of Computer & Information Science & Engineering, and the Warrington Professional MBA programs. He has also taught for multiple departments at Santa Fe College and UF. He holds a doctorate in history from UF with a focus on the American South.

**Susan Crowley**  
Assistant Vice President, Community Relations  
Office of Government and Community  
Relations



Susan Crowley facilitates the relationship between UF and the region's governments and communities. The UF Office of Government and Community relations is responsible for the Gator Volunteer website (<http://gatorsvolunteer.ufl.edu>).

This website grew out of the success of the UF Campaign for Charities (UFCC) – the employee giving campaign through which UF faculty and staff give about \$1 million each year to about 95 qualified local charities. This website was central to last year's Day of Leadership and Service in providing information for the campus.

Manda Wittebort  
Program Coordinator  
The David and Wanda Brown Center  
for Leadership & Service



Manda Wittebort works on experiential programs for first year undergraduates through graduate school. Their primary program, Path to Purpose, is a year-long leadership and social change fellowship grounded in a community organizing model. Students have the opportunity to undergo workshops highlighting relationship building, personal development/branding, leadership, communication, community organizing, etc. They get exposed to numerous community organizations and leaders in Gainesville and Alachua County and develop relationships in the community to support long-term goals of positive community growth. The fellowship aims to establish a tradition of community collaboration and social change, inspiring students to meet specific community needs, be innovative in approaching our shared future, and promote growth and personal development.



# Faculty Symposium Presentations

Thursday, December 1, 12:00-2:30 EDT

The symposium will include presentations by participants and a discussion about the next steps for the Faculty Learning Community.



**FALL 2022**

**UF QUEST**

**UF** | Center for Teaching Excellence  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Center for Teaching Excellence  
200 Bryant Space Science Center  
1772 Stadium Rd.  
Gainesville, FL 32611  
[teach.ufl.edu](http://teach.ufl.edu)

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Office of Global Learning  
1765 Stadium Road, The Hub  
Gainesville, FL 32611  
(352) 294-3333  
[internationalcenter.ufl.edu](http://internationalcenter.ufl.edu)