



**Getting Started with Implementation of General Education (Universal Undergraduate Education) revisions at UNLV**

Dave James: [dave.james@unlv.edu](mailto:dave.james@unlv.edu) x5-5804  
Jeff Jablonski [Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu) x5-0947

should we try to be like them, they're not an aspirational peers") – *answer, because they are urban, commuter-based public "high research" institutions recognized as national leaders in the effort to improve undergraduate education*

**December 5 – General Education Advisory committee meeting – first discussion of Neal's mandate**

Gen Ed Advisory Committee members who attended the Nov 21 and Dec 1 events discussed concluded that faculty at large are generally not aware of or still resistant to campus-wide Gen Ed reform efforts, and we need to

- generate and provide background information that explains what we're trying to do and why
- provide generous opportunities for faculty discussion about how they could engage in attainment of the proposed outcomes

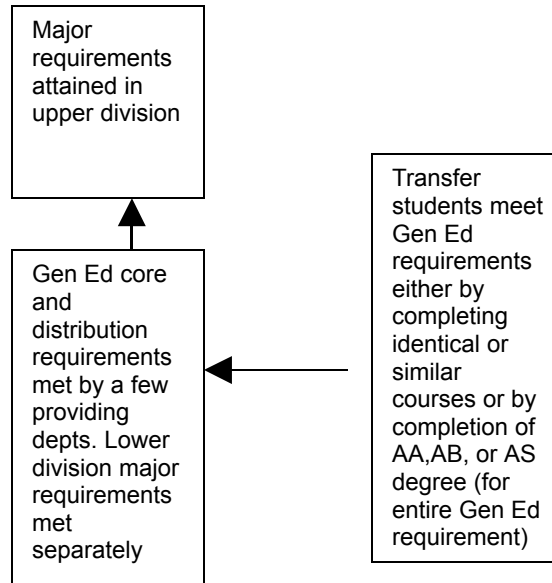
## Getting Started with Implementation of General Education (Universal Undergraduate Education) revisions at UNLV

Dave James: [dave.james@unlv.edu](mailto:dave.james@unlv.edu) x5-5804  
Jeff Jablonski [Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu) x5-0947

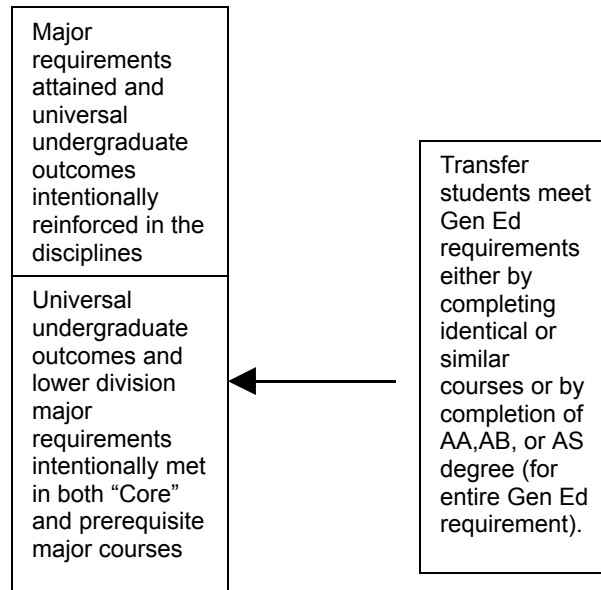
### II. A possible way to visualize what we're trying to do.

“General Education” integrated into Undergraduate education instead of separate from Undergraduate education

#### Old model



#### New Model



**Getting Started with Implementation of General Education (Universal Undergraduate Education) revisions at UNLV**

Dave James: [dave.james@unlv.edu](mailto:dave.james@unlv.edu) x5-5804  
Jeff Jablonski [Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu) x5-0947

**III. Political realities – Dave’s thoughts**

1. Departments and individual faculty feeling
  - worried about their existence, due to administrative program review and budget cuts
  - overworked - higher teaching loads – due to budget cuts
  - overworked – due to NWCCU accreditation reports
  - economically fragile, due to national economic recession, news of family and friends losing their jobs, sharp reductions in stocks/bonds/mutual funds, and lack of any COLA or Merit raises in the near future
2. Some programs are wary of proposed Gen Ed changes, concerned that changed Gen Ed requirements would force reduction of their own disciplinary curricula
3. Some programs are major Gen Ed service providers and are FTE-driven – idea of Gen Ed change makes them uneasy. Would they lose FTE if new or changed curricula were proposed?
4. “Race to FTE” encourages depts. and faculty to
  - propose and implement courses for Gen Ed designations to attract students and boost enrollments
  - make some Gen Ed courses “easy” to attract students and retain enrollments
5. Some programs dissatisfied with quality of student-retained learning that is supposed to be reinforced in “Gen Ed” courses , in for example, written communications, mathematics
6. Students prioritize their money, time, and effort. This cuts two ways
  - they look for easy classes to balance their schedules – favors easy Gen Ed
  - they don’t like to waste their money and their time coming to campus – favors engaging more challenging Gen Ed
7. Presence of “easy” Gen Ed classes, some taught by PTI’s reduces perceived worth of educational experience at UNLV and perceived quality of UNLV as an institution of higher learning

**IV. Request for Advice - *How do we approach dept faculty with ideas for Gen Ed change in this environment?***

---

---

---

---

**Getting Started with Implementation of General Education (Universal Undergraduate Education) revisions at UNLV**

Dave James: [dave.james@unlv.edu](mailto:dave.james@unlv.edu) x5-5804

Jeff Jablonski [Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu) x5-0947

**V. Suggested Ideas for approaching the faculty**

**A. Reassure depts./programs that they are not under “existential threat” from the administration**

- 1) There will still be a Core with English, constitutions, math, natural science and social sciences or humanities requirements – because that is required by NSHE
- 2) Transfer students who have been awarded a AA, AS or AB degree at an NSHE institution will automatically meet the Gen Ed requirements – this is a System mandate
- 3) Total credit requirements for “gen ed” and credits toward degrees would very likely the same

**B. Show faculty and departments how these proposed changes could benefit themselves and their students**

- 1) encourage faculty to visualize how
  - i) improved attainment of the proposed Universal Undergraduate Education outcomes could help student perform better in upper division classes in the discipline
  - ii) attainment of the proposed Universal Undergrad Education outcomes could help them (i.e., “describe the universal characteristics of ideal graduate or professional student”, and then “what could you do, both in the Core and in your discipline to develop that ideal grad student?”)
  - iii) there are opportunities to conduct research and publish in the scholarship of the teaching of their disciplines,
  - iv) engagement with the universal undergraduate education outcomes can change student and faculty perceptions about “gen ed” from something separated from students’ education and “lower in value than” the disciplines to something integrated into students’ education and “equivalent in value to” the disciplines.
  - v) how implementation of both improved practices and an integrated curriculum could foster development a campus intellectual climate where students and faculty enjoy teaching and learning of “gen ed” – and how this might enhance the reputation and desirability of UNLV
  - vi) adoption state of the art Universal Undergraduate Education Outcomes and implementation of curriculum and practices to attain them could make UNLV better place for teaching learning and enhance its reputation and desirability as a place

Key to the success of this effort would be to find ways to

- a) reach faculty where they are (emotionally, intellectually) at this point and
  - i) help them to develop understanding of the regional and national paradigm shift to
    1. to *integrate* traditionally separate general education/core requirements and those of the major. And

**Getting Started with Implementation of General Education (Universal Undergraduate Education) revisions at UNLV**

Dave James: [dave.james@unlv.edu](mailto:dave.james@unlv.edu) x5-5804  
Jeff Jablonski [Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu) x5-0947

2. attain universal outcomes for all undergraduate learning,

ii ) Convince faculty that we are trying to move to the forefront of undergraduate education (while at the same time balancing the research mission/incorporating research mission into undergrad ed.), so there must be some “bold” risk-taking or willingness to try something new

**C. Make the effort to visualize, plan and think about changes reasonable** - Spring 2009 Planning Effort at departments will not be a massive “fill in the matrix, submit and forget” exercise.

We'd like the departments to see that actions we ask them to complete in the planning effort require some thought and effort, but aren't burdensome to complete

***{What do you think of this as a possibility? Adopt a simple reporting model very similar to the framework developed by Dr. Babbitt for Academic Assessment}***

**1) For departmental contribution to the proposed universal outcomes campus wide, one page** describing three specific actions to be undertaken next year, that a department or program could take to improve curriculum or practices. For example,  
- philosophy could propose an experimental course in ethics team taught with political science (curriculum) to be taught Spring 2010  
- physics could propose peer-graded writing exercises in PHYS 156 (practices) a current “gen ed” physics class, to be implemented in Fall 2009

**2) For evaluation of how to attain the proposed outcomes in at the beginning discipline, one page**, describing three specific actions that a program could take to attain proposed outcomes in the discipline. For example, civil engineering could

- at the beginning of its curriculum – revise its CEE 110 Introduction to Engineering syllabus to include a inquiry (information literacy) component to the students' term report

- in the middle of its curriculum – decide to modify its 300-level course syllabi to include short written papers on the application of the engineering principles to modern constructed infrastructure – (eg how structural analysis is used in the design of telescoping cranes)

- at the end of the curriculum - document that its current CEE 497/498 capstone course contributes to attainment of a communications requirement (curriculum and practice)

**D. Show specific examples of how it could work – so that the planning effort doesn't seem to be “impossible”**

1) Show examples of how UNLV could attain the outcomes – through revised, improved educational practices

For example – engaging in the discipline

i) universal outcomes could be attained throughout the curriculum, instead of gen ed outcomes attained in lower division courses, such as

**Getting Started with Implementation of General Education (Universal Undergraduate Education) revisions at UNLV**

Dave James: [dave.james@unlv.edu](mailto:dave.james@unlv.edu) x5-5804  
Jeff Jablonski [Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu) x5-0947

- a. Communications outcome met by writing in the discipline, or across the curriculum – adjusting a junior level course syllabus to include more writing
- b. culminating experience course in the discipline where attainment of communications, information literacy and critical thinking outcomes is demonstrated, For example:
  - i) in engineering, hotel, business, nursing or education an integrative capstone class with report,
  - ii) in music, dance or sculpture, a juried performance/exhibition,
  - iii) in chemistry, philosophy, political science or history, a research paper

- 2) Show examples of new, Curricular or co-curricular Core experiences that could be developed to attain the outcomes For example
- Information literacy and critical thinking could be attained in a research-based course in the discipline, existing course, modified course or new course
  - Ethics and citizenship could be met by new courses in philosophy, political science, business, criminal justice or communications, either individually or team-taught

***{Is this “too directive” – would majority of faculty object to our giving them examples?}***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**VI. Next steps in getting this effort going**

A. December 2008 – January 2009 – develop the framework for the departmental planning events

- December 17 2008** Gen Ed Advisory committee will meet Dec 17 to
1. review its final report recommendations on Gen Ed outcomes and educational practices and
  2. develop the planning framework that can be used in college and department planning meetings in the Spring of 2008. This framework is to be ready by early

**Getting Started with Implementation of General Education (Universal Undergraduate Education) revisions at UNLV**

Dave James: [dave.james@unlv.edu](mailto:dave.james@unlv.edu) x5-5804  
Jeff Jablonski [Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.jablonski@unlv.edu) x5-0947

February 2009

**February 2009 -**

The proposed goals of meetings in the Spring with departments and colleges will be  
a) to inform / provide background about why Gen Ed / Undergraduate Education reform is being undertaken [it's not so much that it is "needed"—which contributes to defensiveness about "what is not working"—as it is a desire to improve, to become a leader, to move to the forefront

c) to ask department faculty to consider ways that they could contribute to:

1. attaining the proposed universal outcomes, both
  - a. by contributing to campus wide requirements
  - b. and in their own programs
  
2. both in terms of
  - a. possible curricular contributions (existing, modified or new) at the beginning middle and end of students' undergraduate careers, and
  - b. by infusing improved educational practices throughout the beginning, middle and end of their curricula, as they relate to the universal outcomes

**Requested Participation by Faculty Senate Gen Ed committee –**

Could you please

1) From your perspective as the group that has to review applications, and transfer petitions and waivers

a) Offer advice and input about the proposed integrated Undergraduate Learning Outcomes?

b) Offer advice and input about proposed methods of approaching and engaging faculty, (listed above) in planning how to implement the outcomes?

Do the proposed approaches work for you? Would you be engaged or "put off"?

If they don't work, what would work?

2) Be willing to participate in the meeting next week and in meetings in January to develop the Planning Framework to be used in Spring 2009?

B. February – May 2009 – Go to the Colleges and Depts and solicit their advice