THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

General Education: The Road Ahead

Faculty Forum

November 21, 2019

Outline of Today's Forum

- General Education at UMaine
  - Structure
  - Assessment Findings
- Looking ahead
  - Strategic Vision and Values Framework
  - Alternative General Education structures
- Discussion Questions

1. The University of Maine has a well-designed and stewarded General Education Plan.

2. The University of Maine follows a recognized model for General Education.

3. General education plays a significant role in preparing University of Maine graduates for life in the 21st century.

4. The University of Maine has a way of monitoring General Education.

Creative

Problem-Solver

Versatile

Innovative

Critical Thinker

Engaged

University of Idaho

The University of Idaho's General Education Curriculum is a broad-based, interdisciplinary, multi-year, vertically integrated liberal arts educational experience. These learning outcomes, aligned with the University of Idaho's Five Learning Outcomes, seek to address the question of what it is that entails a twenty-first century educated person, and meet the needs of employers, a democratic society and the challenges of a rapidly changing and diverse world.

University of Vermont

The General Education Program reflects the faculty's aspirations for all UVM undergraduates. General Education is the foundation of a transformative educational experience that prepares students to become accountable leaders who bring to their work dedication to the global community, a grasp of complexity, effective problem-solving and communication skills, and an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct. General Education courses transcend disciplinary boundaries; they help students develop integrated competencies that are essential to lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

The University of Maine

“The University’s goal is to ensure that all of its graduates, regardless of the academic major they pursued, are broadly educated persons who can appreciate the achievements of civilization, understand the tensions within it, and contribute to resolving them.” (University of Maine Undergraduate Catalog)

Human Values and Social Contexts

Ethics

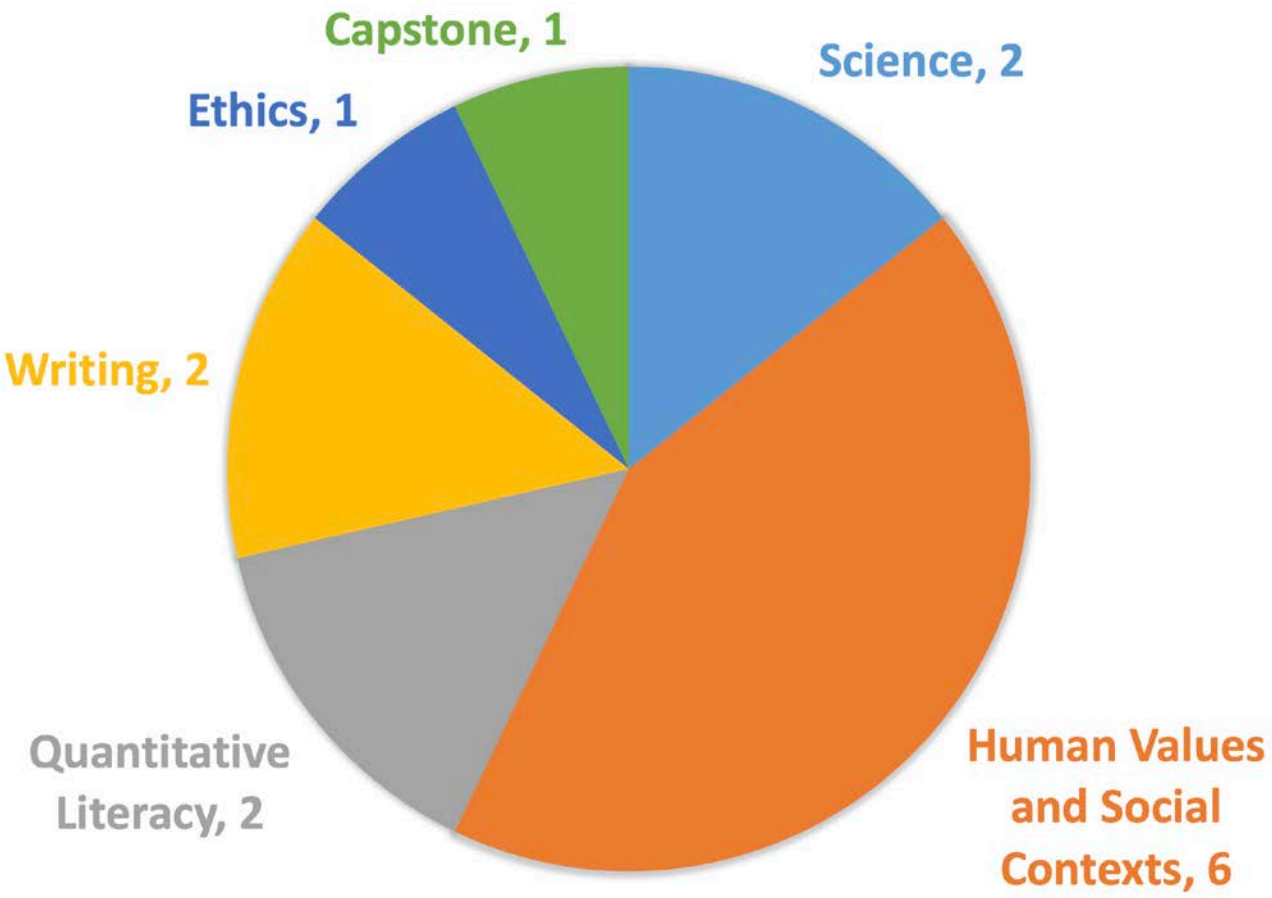
Quantitative Literacy

Science

Writing Competency

Capstone Experience

Gen Ed Requirements at UMaine (courses*)



*assumes 3-hour courses

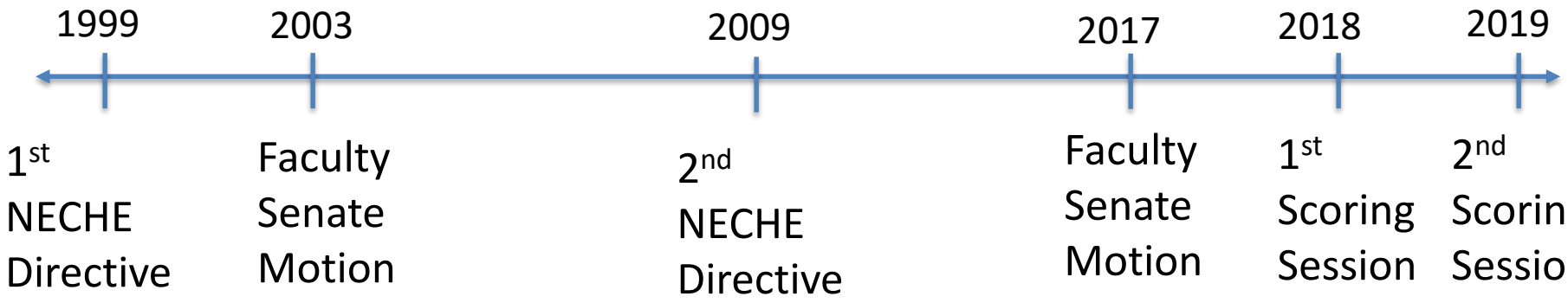
AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment (IGEA)

- Summer 2019 Academic Affairs sent a five-member team to the AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment
  - Development of Action Plan for improving General Education

IGEA Action Plan

This work is being led by the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs and General Education Committee

Gen Ed Assessment Timeline

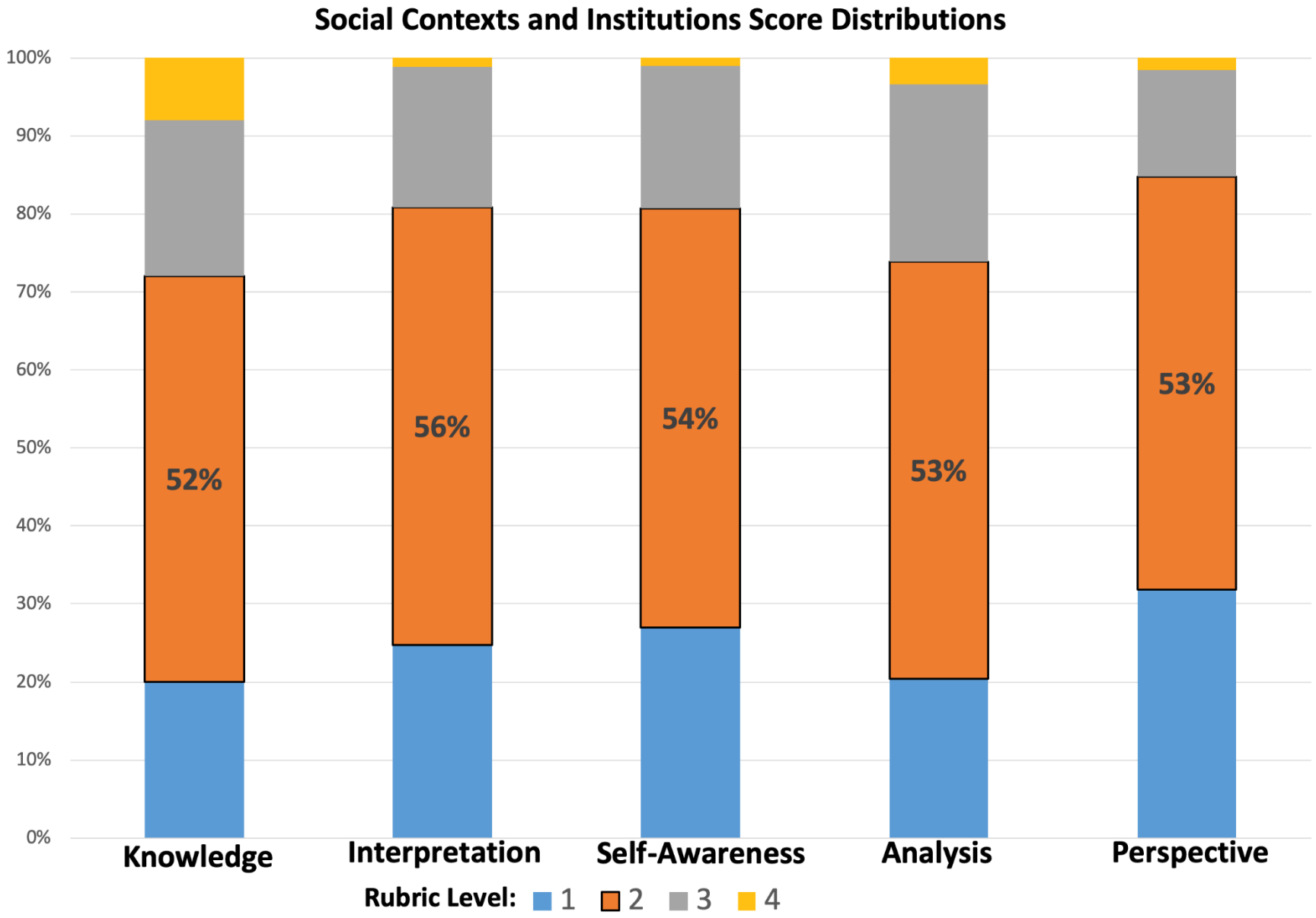


Assessment Process:

- Sample and collect student artifacts
- Score artifacts using rubric

Rubric Levels:

Capstone	Milestone	Milestone	Benchmark		
4	3	2	1	0	NA


Social Contexts and Institutions Score Distributions
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
52%
56%
54%
53%
53%
Knowledge
Interpretation
Self-Awareness
Analysis
Perspective
Rubric Level: 1 2 3 4

Assessment Findings:

- Low to moderate reliability
- Weak Alignment
- Majority of students scored at Level 2

Capstone	Milestone	Milestone	Benchmark
4	3	2	1

Feedback from Scoring Session

Concerns

- Too much choice
- Classes no longer fit
- Student confusion
- Learning outcomes

Positive Comment

- Flexible

Looking Ahead

Current state at UMaine:

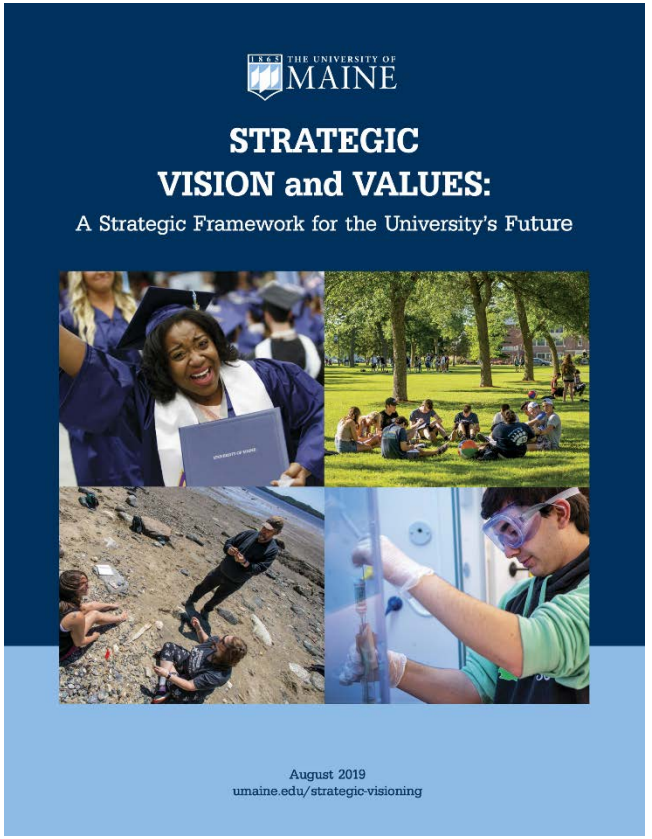
- Too many choices?
- Gen Ed courses not aligned with learning outcomes
- **Implementation of Strategic Vision and Values framework**

National Trends

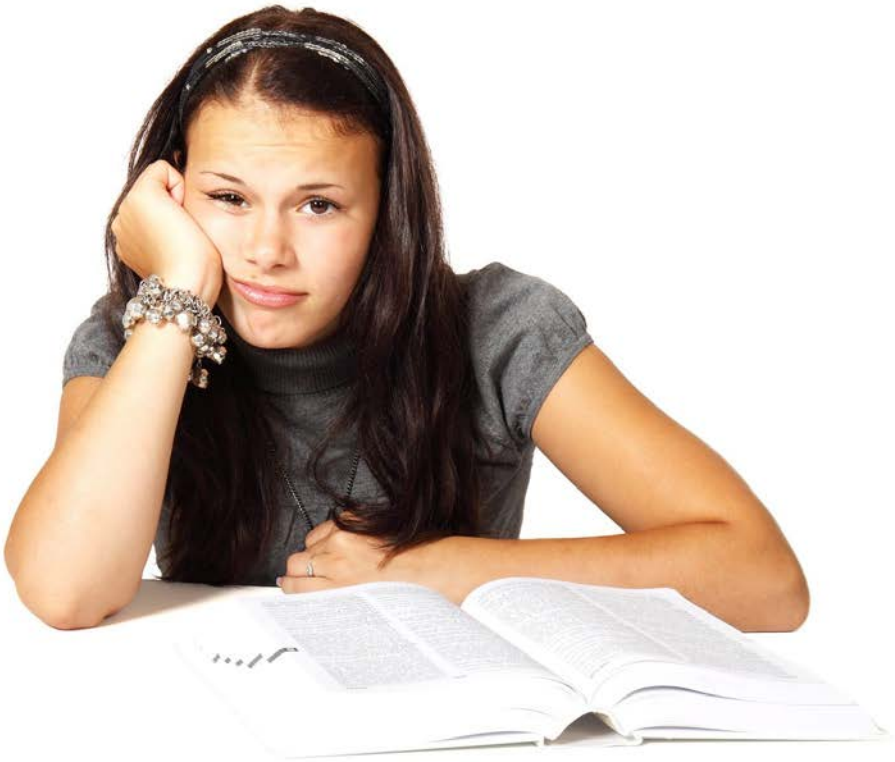
- Changing National Conversation: Trend moving away from distribution model
- Increased competition for fewer students
- Changing workforce needs

New Strategic Framework for UMaine

Goal 1:
We will support and grow Maine's economy through new discoveries and by building a workforce whose members are engaged in their communities and prepared for lifelong success.



Possible Areas of Gen Ed Reform:



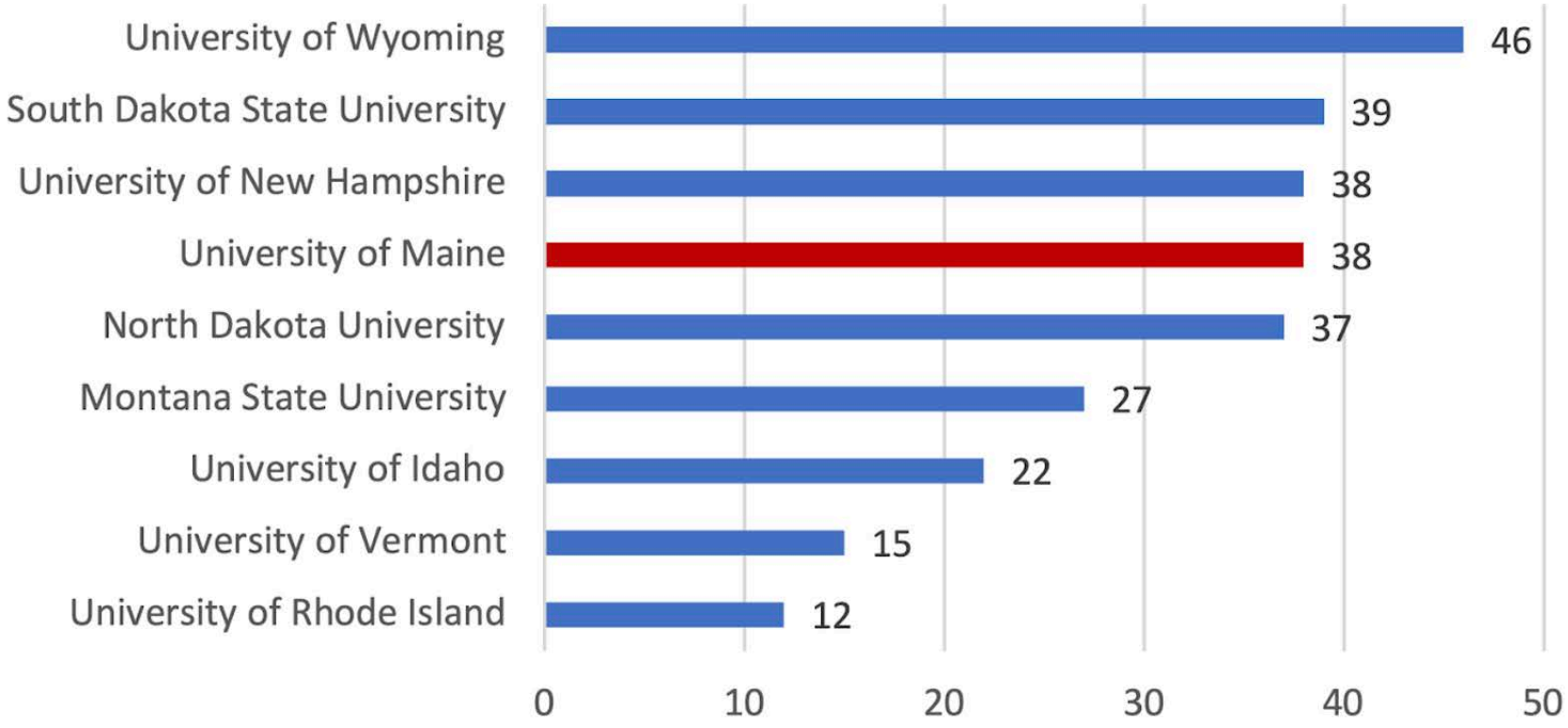
Student Perception

Northeastern's Self-Authored Integrated Learning (SAIL)

Possible Area of Gen Ed Reform:

Increased Cohesiveness

Number of Required General Education Student Learning Outcomes

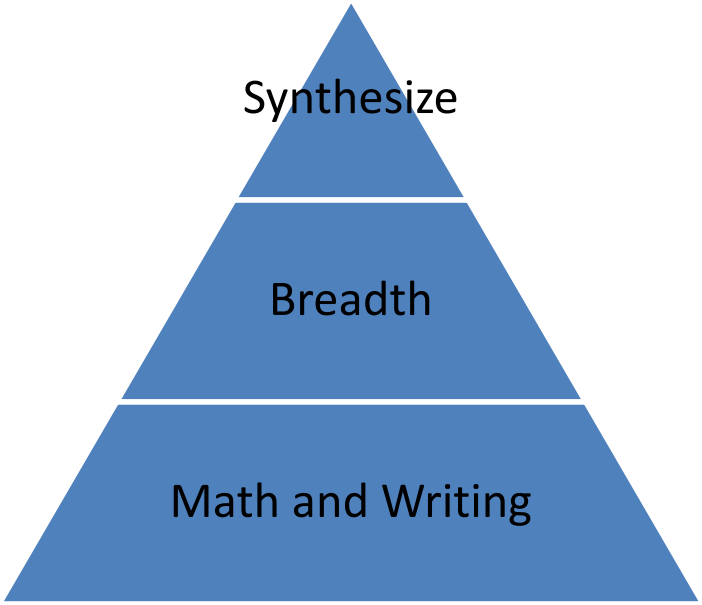


High Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- ePortfolios
- Outreach/Service Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Projects

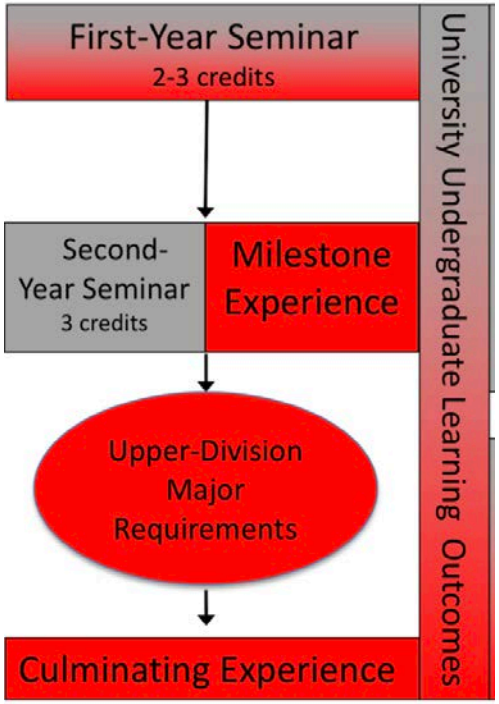
Pathways

- Clear coherent path through gen eds
- Ex: California State Chico, Virginia Tech



Tiered

- Move through gen eds by completing “tiers”
- Ex: Ohio State, University of Arizona



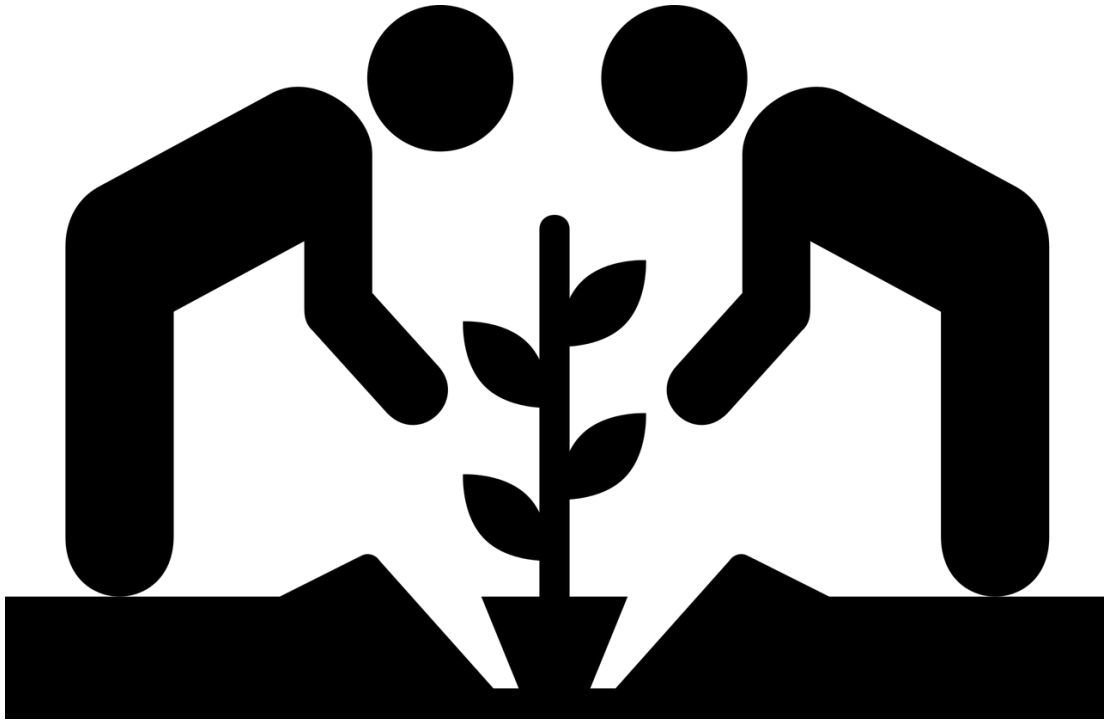
Vertically Integrated

- Major requirements and gen ed curriculum are integrated
- Ex: University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Grand Challenges

- Interdisciplinary courses that address 21st century problems
- Ex: University of Rhode Island, Carnegie Mellon

Possible Area of Gen Ed Reform:



Stewardship

What do other universities do?

- Councils
- Centers, Offices
- Directors
- Committees
- Faculty Senate committees
- Provost/administrative offices
- None

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2. The University of Maine follows a recognized model for General Education.

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4. The University of Maine has a way of monitoring General Education.

Timeline:

- Spring 20: **Research** on best practices, campus views
- Fall 20: **Feedback** on draft recommendations
- Spring 21: **Decision** making

Spring 2020

What is the best form for engaging the UMaine community to **research best practices and perceptions** of General Education?

A. Series of open forums (similar to Strategic Vision and Values)
B. Working groups (similar to First-Year Student Success Initiative)
C. Reports to community from Faculty Senate General Education subcommittee
D. Other

Fall 2020

What is the best form for engaging the UMaine community to **gather feedback for modifying a draft plan** for General Education?

A. Series of open forums (similar to Strategic Vision and Values)
B. Working groups (similar to First-Year Student Success Initiative)
C. Reports to community from Faculty Senate General Education subcommittee
D. Other

Spring 2021

What is the best form for engaging the UMaine community to **make decisions** about General Education?

Join our team...