

April Responses: Skills and Content
NM Statewide General Education Steering Committee

Central 1 (Noonen, CNM, SFCC)

Below is SFCC’s list of essential knowledge. CNM also revised the essential skills (attached).

Essential Content

1. LEAP Outcome

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages and the arts, including

- Study of human society and the individual: understanding the individual’s place in the world: local and global history, natural history, politics, American political system & civic responsibility, culture, and identity
- Psychology/interpersonal communication/self-understanding
- Humanities: history, philosophy, literature, religious studies, ethics, rhetoric, aesthetics and the arts
- Lab science—understanding the way scientists think and communicate as well as the current state of scientific understanding
- Statistics—data collection and analysis

2. Foundations & skills for lifelong learning: Health and Wellness

CNM, SFCC

List of skills (to replace the current five Areas)	Suggested Changes & Change Notes
1. COMMUNICATION SKILLS	
Written, oral, non-verbal, and digital communication	Change title to reflect a wider range of communication. We think this change makes it more specific.
Collaborative Skills: Inclusion, Teamwork, and Negotiation	
Visual literacy (analyzing visual information and interpreting images)	Move from “Information and Digital Literacy”
Listening	Remove. Success in almost every college course will require listening skills. Please keep this; it should be explicitly taught and assessed somewhere, since it will be a vital/essential skill for students to leave with, whether transferring or going into the workforce.
Media Literacy	Moved from “Information Literacy and Digital Literacy”
Critical Reading	
	Remove. This is already addressed as a major skill. Also, everything we do in every course deals with information processing of some kind. Agreed; please see comments in later section.
Basic reading and	Remove. One to two courses in a language does not advance the

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conversational skills in a second language	learning of a language. Second languages should be reserved for particular programs where the complete learning of a second language is the goal. Consider retaining as, "" Students will not become experts, but they will improve communication, increase understanding of the relationships between different languages, and understand a little about how language affects thinking.
2. CREATIVE & CRITICAL THINKING	Rename as Creative and Critical Thinking . Let's not lose the creative part in a sub-title or parenthetical heading. <i>Agreed.</i>
Innovative Problem Solving	Add "Innovative" to the title to include the "creative" part of the category. <i>Agreed—but even non-innovative problem solving can use creative thinking.</i>
Analysis and Synthesis	
Application of the Scientific Method	Add "Application of the" to the title. <i>Agreed.</i>
Ability to apply appropriate modes of thinking/inquiry in different disciplines	Remove. There's no context stated to make sense of the descriptor. <i>Please consider this alternative.</i>
Awareness of Interdisciplinary Relationships	Rename as Awareness of Interdisciplinary Relationships . <i>Agreed.</i>
Logical reasoning	Remove. Logical reasoning is required for success in virtually every class. <i>Please keep. If it's used in many disciplines, then it is an essential skill that should be kept in the list.</i>
Metacognitive Reflection	"Evidence insight?" Rename as Metacognitive reflection . <i>Agreed. Nice.</i>
Qualitative Skills	
Identifying Bias	
3. PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (LEAP)	
Civic Knowledge and Engagement – Local and Global	
Intercultural Knowledge and Competence	Remove "reasoning" and replace with "Awareness" Replace "awareness" with "knowledge" –this is stronger and consistent with LEAP
Multicultural Awareness and Competence	Remove. We think that in the large group we decided the focus was intercultural.
Ethical Reasoning and Action	
Foundations and Skills	

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for Lifelong Learning	
4. QUANTITATIVE SKILLS	
Assessing reasonableness of quantitative results	Remove. Below the college level. Replace with new statement. This type of language is used in the WICHE Passport Outcomes.
Data Analysis and Statistics	
Using Math to Solve Real-World Problems	
Financial Applications	
	Remove. Below the college level. Agreed.
	Remove. Below the college level. Agreed.
5. INFORMATION LITERACY AND DIGITAL LITERACY	“Information” is too broad a word. It applies to any field of study. The clear intent of this category involves digital technology. We thought there were two separate types of literacy addressed here. “Information Literacy” has a specific meaning in the library/research field. It is also mentioned in LEAP. See this link for higher education competencies in this area: http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency
Research, Evaluating Sources, Critical Reading	
Internet	“Digital Communication” should be listed as a Communication category. [OK—let’s check to see if we have a shared definition of digital communication]
Analysis of Ability to Evaluate and Use a Broad Range of Technology	Change title as shown to focus on using technology.
Ability to Use a Broad Range of Software	Add “Ability to Use a Broad Range of” to the title to convey the idea of using software, as opposed to developing software for example.
Visual literacy (bias) Analyze Visually Displayed Information	Rename as Analyze visually displayed information. (Perhaps this should go under Creative and Critical Thinking.) [moved both components of visual literacy to communication; see above]
Media Literacy	Added category [Move to Communication]
Digital Security and Privacy Awareness	Added category
6. INTERDISCIPLINARY SKILLS	Is this different than “Interdisciplinary thinking” listed under category 2?
The ability to apply knowledge in a new context	How is this assessed? Contexts should be named.
Synthesis and advanced	Consider adding this from LEAP.

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accomplishment across general and specialized studies	
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Central 2: SIPI, UNM

SIPI has come up with the following recommendations for essential course content.

For Communication:

- Composition
- Technical Writing
- Speech

Critical Thinking

- A lab science
- A non-lab science or scientific methods course

Personal and Social Responsibility

- American Government
- Global Politics

Quantitative Skills

- Probability and Statistics

Information Literacy

- Computer literacy

If these were each represented by a course, it would equate to 28 credit hours.

From UNM

See separate doc

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East (Jones, ENMU, Luna, Clovis, NMMI)

Eastern New Mexico University Portales
DRAFT
03.23.16
SBL

1) Reducing our Gen Ed hour requirement below its current level will make it difficult for students transferring from out of state, due to issues that can arise from SAP, NCAA, and/or other considerations. If a student from NM has fewer earned Gen Ed hours and transfers out, they will have smaller risk of transferring hours that do not count anywhere and can simply add on missing Gen Eds. Students transferring in, however, will have excess Gen Ed hours that won't count in their degree plan. Further, reducing our non-teaching Gen Ed requirement without considering the State's recent statute to reform teacher Gen Ed (2015, to take effect in July 2016) is short-sighted and we need to consider the alignment between the two kinds of Gen Ed as practiced in NM. Moreover, our state's demographic, national research on workforce and future need as presented at the January state-wide summit and other recent studies argue against narrowing student exposure and experience more than we already have with broader notions of the foundations of a liberal arts education. Beyond that, we have to consider how to align our objectives as we are developing them between our own institutions, but also for our transfers in and out of state.

AZ Gen Ed 35-37 hours. Three pathways: Sciences (STEM), Business, Liberal Arts (i.e. Everything Else). <http://www.aztransfer.com/generaleducation/>

CO Gen Ed 31 hours. Majors that have different pathways (more Gen Ed or different distributions) are noted on website by institution and major.
<http://highered.colorado.gov/academics/transfers/gtpathways/curriculum.html>

TX 35 min hours. <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/apps/tcc/>. Also included with this draft is a .pdf detailing how Texas identifies core skills tied to their SLO in courses offered from their institutions. An additional 6 hours are institutional requirements (optional for each institution to determine).

NM Teaching Gen Ed 35 hours (effective July 2016) Institutions may designate 6 additional hours.
<http://public.nmcompcomm.us/nmpublic/gateway.dll/?f=templates&fn=default.htm>

2) At ENMU we've already reduced our institutional overall hour requirement here to 120 for most programs, unless prohibited by external accreditation requirements (Education licensure degrees, primarily). This review was done as part of our curriculum revision process. We did so by examining and eliminating institutional requirements and streamlining major and minor curricula where possible without loss of quality. For example, IS 151 (Basic Computer Skills) was eliminated as an institutional requirement because those skills are, often, imbedded into the coursework and content areas in other disciplines as they apply to those disciplines (use of SPSS, etc.). It was relatively painless, as programs conducted detailed reviews of their major curricula and--often--found areas where course design and curriculum mapping revealed redundancies that could be addressed by curriculum and course content revision.

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3) Most of our neighbors have applied their general education competencies in ways that allow students to build those skills over the course of their Gen Ed, not in one specific "check the box" course. TX has a good explanation of how they do this (attached) and they aren't the only ones. A course might, after all, include pedagogy and opportunities for critical analysis that address clear communication/meaningful contributions to collaborative work, include qualitative and quantitative analysis to varying degrees, draw on civic/social knowledge and understanding, allow students to strengthen their use of and understanding of the strengths and limitations of technologies (computer skills and media source use for example-- why the 8th grader's blog is NOT a reputable source, for example) and include appropriate opportunities to integrate specific discipline knowledge into new contexts. As we are sure we are finding as we examine state-wide expression of course objectives in general education courses, most courses offered in any area in Gen Ed routinely introduce and reinforce multiple core skills as applied to their subject and content areas.

4) On the 3xx level issue, the NM core should include primarily 1xx-2xx courses. If an institution wishes to extend their core to include an integrative Gen Ed "capstone" they're more than welcome to do so-- but this is beyond the state-wide common core. At ENMU, we already have diversity/global 3xx level courses in many disciplines that have been approved institutionally by our Gen Ed committee to meet a three-credit-hour "extended" Gen Ed requirement. Courses approved to fulfill this requirement are writing intensive and this institutional requirement aligns with our Gen Ed competencies/outcomes goals. Each is assessed on campus and the category was supported strongly by our faculty in a periodic campus-wide review last year. This category fills a particularly important niche requirement for an institution whose mission is to serve a student body that, to a great extent, come from small communities where they have been greatly sheltered and relatively isolated; the global/diversity focus addresses an especially crucial need of the student population that it is our institutional mission to serve.

5) In a 21st century environment where the number of "knowledge bytes" increases exponentially on a daily basis, there is no finite "list" of "essential knowledge" that is applicable to all students. Their degree, including their Gen Ed, should be crafted in ways that allow them to build on strengths/interests (the major or composite program), to round out any gaps in their education to date, to prepare them for increasingly "tailored" career opportunities that rely on nuanced combinations of skills, and should leave room to explore areas that will enhance their lives as social/civically engaged human beings. If a particular institution needs/wants to offer fewer options in a particular category of Gen Ed, that decision should be left to them, based on their resources and capacities. To mandate not only the number, but the options available that would help students reach a competency is not in the best interests of our students.

What Every NMMI College Student Should Know

- **Historical Trends (Names of periods, movements or trends and important moments or advances):**
 - US History
 - Philosophy
 - Social Science
 - American and British Literature
 - Art, Architecture and Music (Classical, Baroque, etc.)
- **Knowledge of Important Cultural Artifacts or Phenomena**
 - US Government structure

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- World religions
- Leadership styles (Perhaps unique to military colleges)
- **Background Knowledge in Disciplines (vocabulary, structure, procedures and methods, etc.):**
 - Foundational vocabulary in each discipline
 - The scientific method
 - Research strategies
 - Foundational vocabulary and structure in one Foreign Language
 - Basic arithmetic and algebra
 - English grammar and mechanics
 - World Geography
 - Computer systems and critical software

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Northern (Martinez, NMHU, NNMC, SJC, UNM-LA)

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Western (Crocker, NMIT, WNMU)

The Essential Skills draft is a good beginning but consideration could be given to condensing more.

- **General Education Versus Liberal Education:** In general, we support the LEAP model. It focuses on “liberal education” throughout the 4 years. Discussion could include what we see as part of the General Education Common Core, and what we see as institutional initiatives beyond the common core in order to integrate liberal education better into the curriculum. (However, if the “core” extends into upper-level courses it raises an issue for the two-year institutions that do not offer upper-level courses.)
- **State-Level vs. Institutional Level:** what is the balance? How much institutional flexibility is included? How do we prevent too much complexity?
- **Content:** In the traditional distribution model content is mostly fragmented by discipline, especially in “intro” courses. Students do need discipline knowledge, especially at the beginning of curricula offerings, but does it have to be (usually) in three-credit-hour fragments? For example, a single “Intro to Learning” course could introduce students to the ways different disciplines seek, collect, interpret, and apply knowledge. Pre-requisites for specific majors would be necessary, but could be institutional as well as majors specific. For example, NMTech requires all students in science and engineering programs to take Physics and Chemistry. HED’s initiative regarding math pathways (devising math requirements based on discipline needs rather than having college algebra as the default requirement) will need to be taken into consideration. In addition, content could be creatively devised in skills courses such as composition. The skills could be practiced in a variety of content areas such as financial and economic literacy (both personal finance and foundations of capitalism); environmental literacy; cultural appreciation.
- **Non-discipline Content Areas:** knowledge outside traditional discipline-specific content areas should be considered. For example, given the changing nature of employment, changes wrought especially by technology, students need to be informed about the future of work, not only the skills and competencies that are required but also an understanding of the technology context in which changes are occurring. (Whatever we recommend will eventually have to go for HED and Legislative review and workforce preparation and competency are very likely to be of interest.)
- **Common Course Numbering:** content will have to be considered in terms of common course numbering. It is possible that creativity/innovation in content could be affected (curtailed) by common course numbering requirements. In addition, the meta-major and math pathways projects need to be in the loop of our considerations.

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Questions

There was some confusion about this month's assignment. I am hoping you and Dan can clarify on Friday. The two interpretations were: 1) Essential Content should be considered independently of the Essential Skills and 2) Essential Content (Essential Knowledge) should be in support of the Essential Skills; that is, that all the Essential Skills be assigned Essential Knowledge. Help!

Tuesday our Gen Ed committee at San Juan College met. None of the members desired to add any specific content to the skills. However, they had several questions that I did not have the answers to. Hopefully you can help me provide clarity for the group on the following:

1. Why is information literacy its own number (5) and also listed under Communication Skills?
2. Are we looking to align each skill set 1-6 to a specific course or courses?
3. Will this list of skills be mapped to existing classes?
4. How do we measure these skills? How will we know if an institution is graduating students proficient in these skills?
5. Will this list replace the Gen Ed Core Transfer Curriculum?

I'm working with the UNM Team - and I'm not sure about point 2 on this list. As the only person representing FINE ARTS on this committee, I'm wondering the best way to note that our courses in FINE ARTS throughout the state - both appreciation/historical and studio courses) cover all the areas. I've convened a group of Fine Arts Faculty to discuss these skills and what content they'd include (making sure that they are not representing their own area but I'm still unsure of how of what we're supposed to gather regarding the essential content (and the best way to go about doing this fairly).

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Attached is a list of the revised essential skills that we worked with Tuesday.

Our next meeting is on Friday, April 1, again on the UNM campus from 11 am to 1 pm. Between now and then, please do the following:

- 1 Review the attached skill summary with faculty groups on your campus and in your system. It is important that they understand that this is a draft and that more skills can be added at the institutional level.
- 2 Meet with your small groups to discuss if there is essential content to go with our essential skills. The caveat is that nobody should argue for their discipline.
- 3 Please have a concise list to me of content by the end of the day on March 29. In addition, please send any feedback on the essential skills.

Let me know if you have any questions.