

Gen Ed Town Hall Summary Notes
Faculty/Staff/Administration

Vision/Themes:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - o Gen Ed promotes well rounded students and good citizens from the local community to the greater world. Cultural exposure, ethics, and philosophy should be considered. Ability to appreciate the world at large. Responsible citizens of the world. Intercultural fluency. Global Learning Pathway.
- General education should provide a general education.
 - o “If its general its general it’s not unique”.
 - o Skills, content, and ideas should be explored and developed. The basic skills for a liberal education are developed in Gen Ed courses. Gen Ed provides the basic/practical skills needed for all the majors at TTU. Skills such as writing, communication, thinking, reading, etc.
 - o Gen Ed provides valuable shared experiences for students of all backgrounds. Connections can be fostered through Gen Ed.
 - o New experiences can be provided in Gen Ed.
- Critical thinking should be developed in Gen Ed course.
 - o Gen Ed provides new ideas and force exploration outside of their selected major or career path.
 - o Gen Ed should not be only factual knowledge but educating the whole person.
 - o New perspectives can be developed in Gen Ed.
 - o Developing character and well-rounded human beings.
 - o “Have a little bit of everything”.
- Lifelong learners and leaders.
- Gen Ed should be helpful in careers and lives.
 - o Can Gen Ed be skills based as well.
- Frame Gen Ed in the context of literacies. Instead of staring over, reframe what we currently offer.
 - o Rather than having department names as buckets, instead have literacies. Ex. Computational thinking, global literacy, financial literacy, etc.
 - o Students should know what skills they need to develop.

Content, Packaging, and Delivery

Content:

- Essential Skills
 - o Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Understanding and Interpreting Research, Race, Cultural Diversity, and Problem-Solving Skills
 - o Critical thinking, reading comprehension, communication, cultural awareness.
 - o Ability to appreciate the world at large.
 - o Science/math as a human endeavor, have a sense of history, ability to communicate, appreciation for science, reasoning skills, critical thinking. Make choices through process of evaluation and selection.
- Computer Course/Technological Literacy

- Include typing, Excel, etc.
- Personal Wellness/Development
 - Mental wellbeing such as managing mental health, anxiety, etc.
 - Courses on cooking, managing a household, etc.
 - Culinary arts courses
 - Health and wellness including PE courses.
 - Time management courses, coping with stress.
- Financial Literacy
 - Personal finance
 - Financial literacy
- Civics/Citizenry/Diversity
 - Citizenry explored through history, communication, and art.
 - How to be a good citizen in the US and globally.
 - History, communication, foreign languages. Etc.
 - Include foreign language in Gen Ed requirement.
- Professional Development
 - Include professional development bucket.
 - Career development course.
 - Career connections made explicit to students.
 - Development of trades in Gen Ed.
- First year experience course could be beneficial. These courses should be collaborative, not major specific, and provide interdisciplinary connections.
- Professional development/career connections could be offered.
- Authentic research opportunities provided in Gen Ed working with faculty.
- Survey courses to develop new passions or interests.
- Communication for the majors. This could include speech and writing. Ex. Nursing majors take a nursing course focused on these skills while an engineer might take a more technical approach in their designated course.
- Integrate service learning into Gen Ed courses.

Packaging:

- Flexibility within Choices
 - Flexibility in the choices for courses that satisfy buckets. Ex. A math course may develop many skills and may count as more than one requirement.
 - Adding an elective bucket that may make Gen Ed more meaningful and personal to a student.
 - Flexibility should be considered; however, a variety of topics should be developed to force exploration.
 - Changing the name of the buckets to allow for more choices/broader topics.
 - Courses count for more than one bucket. Ex. Community health could cover communication and public speaking.
 - Topics course could count as Gen Ed.
 - Buffet of classes

- Elective bucket to allow for choice making Gen Ed personal and meaningful to students.
- Core Gen Ed with basic courses, and an advanced track.
 - Courses for students who do not meet benchmark tests such as ACT.
 - Does Gen Ed have to be early years? Can it be repackaged in different years? Does it need to be front loaded in freshman/sophomore classes?
 - Introductory courses in Gen Ed for students who need it.
 - Could major specific courses be open to Gen Ed for advanced students?
- Exploration Across Disciplines
 - Essential skills/themes should be explored in many courses across many disciplines.
 - Interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses with connections between the disciplines. Courses that approach a topic/subject from many lenses. Explore this with the cohort approach.
 - Pair Gen Ed courses with experience. Ex. Study abroad packaged with a writing course.
- Alternative Education/Pathways
 - Micro credentials could be considered.
 - Past learning experiences might count for something. Ex. Military experience. Transfer credits in religion and FL?
 - Consider the amount of Gen Ed courses. Smaller and more focused programs might attract students.
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- Renaming the buckets or the title of Gen Ed all together. Rename the buckets to include broader topics or interests.

Delivery:

- Experiential learning in courses. Instructors should be invested in Gen Ed courses.
- Smaller courses sizes could prioritize relationship building between professors and students.
- Timing of Gen Ed could be spread across programs of study instead of front loading in freshman/sophomore years.
- Interdepartmental teaching.
- Guest lectures to engage students.

Worthy consideration:

- Skills mapping for Gen Ed. Competency/skills-based grading in some Gen Ed courses.
- Tennessee tech is not a trade school.
- How do we balance requirements with interests?
- More online offerings for Gen Ed courses.
- What is too unique? Gen Ed should be general.
- Consider transfer students both domestic and international when thinking about Gen Ed.
- Are we teaching what we say we are? How are we measuring SLOs and are these authentic assessments in Gen Ed courses?

- Checks and balances with transfer courses.
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For Future Committees:

- If Gen ed is too focused on a major, how does this impact a liberal arts education?
- Culinary arts, personal wellness, etc. program should be offered to students.
- Arts and Sciences cover most of the Gen Ed courses currently. What might this mean for other colleges/departments?
- How do we advertise general education to students?
- What supports are there for faculty if changes are made?
- How is effectiveness of Gen Ed courses measured? What measures are being taken to ensure that information is being received from stakeholders such as community partners and alumni?
- What will need to be done in respect to financial aid if there are changes made? How might this affect programs of study?
- What is the value in college? How do we communicate this value to students? What role may advisors play in this?
- What distinguishes Gen Ed from upper division courses? Is this information available?

Gen Ed Town Hall Summary Notes
Students

Vision/Themes:

- Gen Ed should be relevant to careers and build skills based on what future employers desire. General education should prepare students for college courses and future careers.
- Exploration should be encouraged in Gen Ed courses as they are outside of majors and provide opportunities to develop new skills and interests.
- Gen Ed should provide opportunities for development and utilization of citizenry (local to global).
- Gen Ed should serve all populations of students.

Content, Packaging, and Delivery

Content:

- Introduction to college course, similar to UNIV 1020.
- Financial literacy
- Personal finance course that could be expanded on in other classes
- Digital literacy
- A class focused on learning computing in different situations.
- Communication
- Presentation classes, etc.
- Cross discipline connections
- Consider ethics in a technological education.
- Consider student input for what matters to them in education.
- Variety in the content offered. Specialized classes shouldn't be only for upper classmen.
- Diverse classes in history
- Intro to the sciences classes not only biology or chemistry but geology, archeology, etc.
- Study abroad courses, work study opportunities in gen ed.

Packaging:

- Gen Ed could be major specific. There could be different tracks for majors/types of gen ed.
- Connections to themes across Gen Ed.
- More course choices in the buckets for Gen Ed. "What is history? What counts as history?". Courses may also be counted for more than one bucket based on the content or skills in the course (Ex. History of Arts could be a FA or HIST).

Delivery:

- Smaller course sizes that allow connections between students and faculty. Student should be involved in the course rather than being "talked at". Teaching methods may need to be revisited in Gen Ed courses.
- Learning communities/cohorts (taking courses with the same students, does not have to be within the same major).

- Instructors seem to lack interest and enthusiasm in Gen Ed courses.
- Experiential and authentic learning should be provided in the courses.
- Online courses should be considered for gen ed to provide more opportunities.

Worthy consideration:

- Course load/content of Gen Ed courses may be too overwhelming for students. Consider changing the credit hours of Gen Ed courses.
- Why are AP classes not counted in Gen Ed? Why should you have to repeat a class.

For Future Committees:

- Consider assessment and teaching methods using in Gen Ed. Are these benefiting students?
- Culinary arts, life skills, time management, learning styles, etc., courses/programs should be offered to students. What resources are already available to students and are they being effectively being marketed?