



## Reimagining the Core Curriculum

### Context

Ensuring that college-educated members of society have a broad enough exposure to knowledge of diverse aspects of the human experience is a hallmark of the U.S. liberal arts' educational philosophy and one of the primary reasons for having the "general education" curriculum requirement. In support of this philosophy, yet also acknowledging that no one can know everything, the faculty of each institution determine to what "portfolio of knowledge domains" students of the institution should have exposure so as to reflect salient aspects of the institutional ethos. As the only urban public research university in Denver that is also aspiring to be the nation's first equity-serving institution, CU Denver serves a predominantly working learner commuter population of students seeking social mobility. Considering especially our equity-serving aspiration

- What are the guiding principles that will help us to prioritize what is included in the general education core?
- What do we expect our working learners to cover in their general education core at CU Denver in a manner that aligns seamlessly with each student's general knowledge needs for the different majors being pursued?
- What is the role of our curriculum in workforce development efforts that strengthen social mobility for our learners?
- How are we (or should we be) reflecting and crediting students in the general education core for knowledge acquired experientially? For knowledge acquired before they join CU Denver?
- Are we adequately allowing learners to tailor their general knowledge needs based on the knowledge they acquire elsewhere and through their major?
- What flexibility can we create so that emerging skills and learning objectives can be included in our core curriculum?

### Goal

Ensure that all coursework and other learning activities required of CU Denver students for the purpose of gaining a broad-based educational experience align well with and complement the learner's major field of study and enhance the overall quality of educational experience, while facilitating a timely progression to their pursued credential and their successful engagement in the workforce and/or industry of their choosing.

## **Charge**

This working group will critically reflect on, research national models for, and propose a CU Denver-informed model for what makes sense to include in our “general education”/ “core curriculum” portfolio for students who declare different academic majors. The Group shall consider the various CU Denver student personas developed through the SEM planning process (cf. Dr. Snowden) and our urban public research and commuter campus context, to reimagine the Core. Critical questions to consider include (but are not limited to):

- (1) What must the structure and content of the core curriculum be for students in different academic majors to provide for their “broad education” yet find the components of the core to be germane to and complementary of their academic major focus and interests?
- (2) How should the core be configured to eliminate barriers to students’ academic progression, especially when they need to switch majors?
- (3) How should documented prior learning and experiential learning factor into the general education core requirements?

## **Deliverables**

Milestone reports (intervals to be decided by the working group) toward a thoughtfully developed core curriculum that credits learners holistically for the variety of demonstrated skills and competences acquired from diverse sources and experiences.

## **Timeline**

Year 1: Complete the research for, develop, and present a curriculum proposal for discussion.  
Year 2: Discuss, revise, and adopt the re-envisioned curriculum for launch in the fall of Year 3.  
Year 3: Launch and promote the re-envisioned core curriculum.