



ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROGRAM REPORT 2016-2017

Instructions: The program should address each section and provide recommendations using the CAR/Academic Program Review Recommendations Report. This narrative format is intended to capture the comprehensive scope of the program. For each degree program in your academic areas, complete a separate report. The report should be limited to 10 pages. Any appendices should not exceed 5 pages. Findings from this report should inform your recommendations.

NAME of the Program: General Studies A.A. Degree (611A, 611B, 611C, 611 D, 611Z)

Section One: Program Overview:

1. Program History/Purpose/Vision

a. Provide a brief overview of the program and how this program serves students. The General Studies Degree is designed to allow students to explore personal, professional and academic areas of interest while setting up a program that supports transfer to a four-year institution.

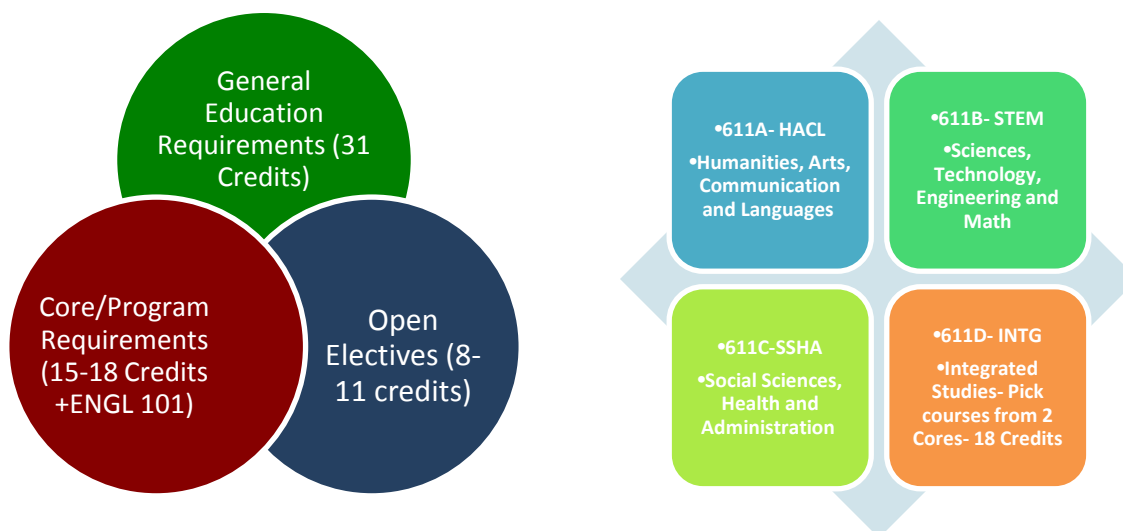
The General Studies A.A. degree is designed to serve the student who:

1. Is undecided on a major focus on entry to college
2. Has transfer plans that are not met in another degree program
3. Has specific interests and academic goals which are not met by any existing degree programs

The General Studies degree does not replace academic degrees in specific discipline or career areas. It should allow a student to explore an area or areas of interest as identified by the student in collaboration with counseling and instructional faculty advisors.

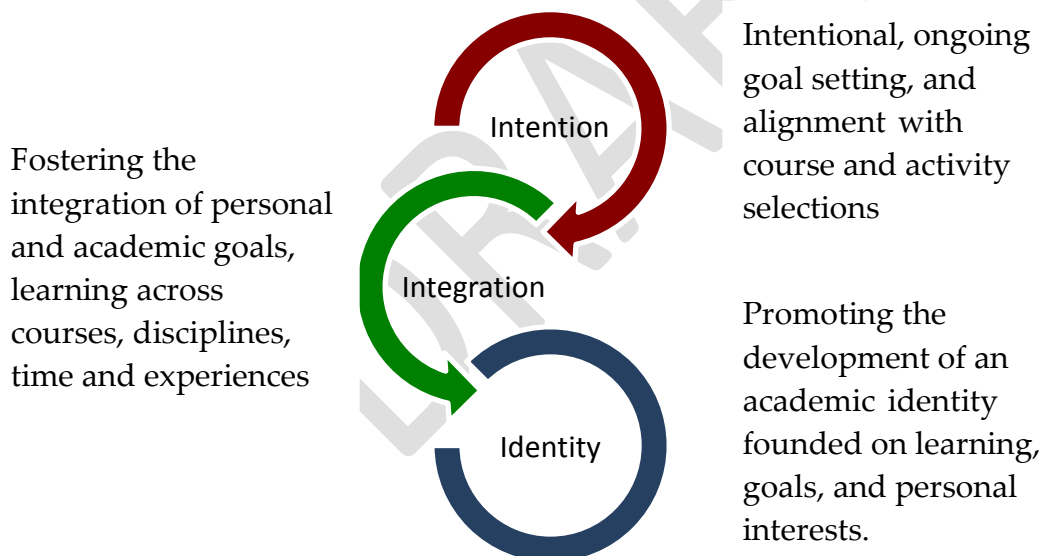
The General Studies program has undergone significant revisions impacting the curriculum and oversight of the degree program. Three key curriculum revisions have taken place: 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 catalog years reflect the addition of 15 credits of 200 level course work. The 2015-2016 catalog revision reflects a full redesign of the program, introducing 4 interdisciplinary cores that require students to make more intentional decisions and create a more cohesive educational program. The 2016-2017 catalog revision reflects the new General Education program requirements. These changes reflect both recommendations from Middle States, the College's accrediting agency as well as internal deliberations and restructuring.

The new General Studies program requirements and program structure are as follows



Note: Students may also register as General Studies Undecided, 611Z, but cannot graduate from this core. Students registered for 611Z must select the appropriate core or another major by the completion of 30 credits.

The General Studies program emphasizes



As part of the revision to the General Studies program, a collaborative leadership structure and department chair were implemented; this team reports directly to the Associate Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. The General Studies Leadership Team is made up of the General Studies Department Chair, pair coordinators for each core, one counseling faculty and one instructional faculty, and several resources members including a transfer counselor and the Chair of Integrative Studies. Additionally, core committees of faculty representatives from the disciplines in each core have been created. Finally, 5 year benchmarks and strategic initiatives were developed and an infrastructure for General Studies, a website, advising worksheets, advising resources, brochures and informational materials were developed.

b. Current Initiatives aligned with Academic Affairs Division Priorities

In addition to the complete revision of the program which embeds initiatives aligned with the Academic Affairs division priorities, the General Studies program has focused on three big initiatives:

- Implementing an Instructional Faculty Advising plan including General Studies Academic Plans and academic maps
- Piloting an e portfolio learning experience for students
- Implementing an OER Z-degree

2. Program Curriculum

The General Studies degree program is a flexible, open program which allows students significant choice, so ensuring that students have a cohesive experience that promotes synthesis of learning is an essential task and requires collaboration from across the college. In the long term, the General Studies program is exploring the use of a program level electronic portfolio to foster cohesion and coherence in a students' individual experience, to promote students' deeper learning, metacognitive skills, and achievement of the General Studies program goals, and to provide a vehicle that allows for assessment and improvement of the program.

The General Studies degree includes:

Successful completion of 60 credits of college-level coursework, with at least 15 credits at the 200 level, including:

- En 101, 3 credits, if needed; alternate elective, if not.
- General Education requirements, 31 credits
- Core requirements, either 15 credits from one Core, or 18 credits, 9 credits each, from two different Cores
- Electives: 8-11 credits of open electives

Additional Requirements/Guidelines

Students will:

- Maintain an academic plan on file with the College
- GENU students must, select a Core upon completion of 30 credits, if not sooner

Student should:

- Attempt math and English General Education foundations within the first 24 college-level credits or upon completion of prerequisite or required non-credit coursework

Cores

Concentration areas are interdisciplinary options for course selection:

- Studies in Humanities, Arts, Communication, and Languages (611AHACL)
- Studies in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- Studies in Social Sciences, Health, and Administration (SSAH)
- Integrated Studies, a combination of 2 cores (INTG)

Courses are included in concentration areas based on course designators as a whole (for traditional A.A. degree disciplines) or on a course-by-course basis (for traditional A.S. degree disciplines) based on transferability and type of course.

Program Goals and Outcomes

In addition to the program outcomes, the General studies program emphasizes the following **goals**, which support student success, retention, and completion

- Structured, intentionally sequenced decision making
- Self-exploration and discovery
- Reflection and refining of academic, personal and career focus and interests,
- Confidence in self as a learner and decision maker
- The development of practical and intellectual skills

Creating Pathways

The General Studies Leadership Team in collaboration with academic disciplines is in the process of creating academic maps to provide broad recommendations to help students make course selections and follow an effective course sequence.

Interim Assessment Plan

While we are exploring the feasibility, effectiveness, and sustainability of a program eportfolio experience, we will evaluate the effectiveness of the General Studies program in a variety of ways, using existing data, identifying additional useful data, and directly assessing student learning. The General Studies program has been through significant curricular changes in the past two years, and we anticipate that in the process of reviewing data and setting up the interim General Studies assessment plan, we will identify both benchmark data as well as ways of improving the program.

Assessment	Timeline	Outcomes for All Cores
1. General Studies Student Academic Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and Implement GS Academic Plans- Summer 17- Spring 18 • Assess- Spring 19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate a plan for their educational and career development that relates their coursework to their goals.
2. Survey instructional and counseling faculty for current processes/activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement survey- Fall 2017- Spring 2018 • Review Results Spring 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to identify available resources related to their ongoing educational and professional development.
3. Review existing General Education data as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. General Studies vs. All students b. General Studies broken out by credit level- <15 vs. >45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Data in Spring 2018 	

c. General Studies students who have been assessed multiple times		<p>across discipline areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to find, evaluate, use, and synthesize information needed to address increasingly complex problems and scenarios. • Students will be able to use technology effectively to accomplish a variety of general and discipline specific activities. • Students will be able to communicate effectively in writing and orally appropriately across disciplines.
4. Identify 200 level courses in core disciplines that are not part of the Gen Ed program, (not program requirements for existing degrees) and solicit assessment from them		
5. Collect existing signature assignments from targeted students in 200 level General Education course and conduct secondary assessment		
6. Survey instructional and counseling faculty for current processes/activities (Same as Assessment #1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and Implement GS Academic Plans- Summer 17- Spring 18 • Assess- Spring 19 	
7. Survey graduating students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop survey- summer 2017 • Implement Survey - Spring graduation time frame 	
8. Assess reflection in Gen Ed signature assignments (Assessment #4 and #5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess reflection 	
• Gen Studies enrollment patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing/Yearly 	
• Gen Studies transfer patterns and data (what we can get access to)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing/Yearly 	
• Change of major patterns for GENU undecided students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing/Yearly 	

Program/Curriculum Considerations

Some of the curriculum considerations, the General Studies leadership team is considering include:

- Removal or reduction of the General Studies – GENU (611Z) option,
- Discipline specific Academic Mapping to provide recommendations for course selection and sequencing.
- Implementation of General Studies benchmarks,

- Changes to courses included in the Cores (currently, inclusion of DATA courses, moving of Gender Studies courses to alternate core to align with Gen Ed.)
- Options to increase alignment of instruction to the program outcomes,
- Including making more explicit development of essential career skills.
- Development of a General Studies specific academic plan
- Exploring ways of embedding more academic planning and goal setting in courses

4. **Program Models and Best Practices** Conduct a benchmarking analysis to compare program practices. Using the MC Peer Institutions List provided, identify three institutions to answer the questions within the table below. *(Note: An external program accreditors report may be substituted for this information. Use the findings gathered from this information to craft possible recommendations).*

College Name or Accrediting Body: List names of people and position interviewed, institution's website, and phone number and any other pertinent contact information.	Valencia College See attached report	Prince George's College see attached report	CCBC See attached Report
Briefly explain why the program at this institution was chosen.	Size and reputation- includes academic mapping and pathways	Location as a neighbor school.	Comparable size and location as neighbor school.
What similarities exist between Montgomery College's program and this institution?	See attached report for more detail	Similar program structure of cores (called options).	Similar General Education program
What differences exist between Montgomery College's program and this institution?	Very different structure, more intensive use of technology and advising.	18 credits at 2000 level, capstone course, capstone courses include portfolios	Similar to older structure of General Studies at MC. More focused advising around metamajors
<i>Summary Questions: Based on information from the three institutions above, please answer the following questions below:</i>			
How does MC's program requirements, course offerings, and content compare to the other institutions' program in quantity, scope, and depth? Advising and providing students with early guidance and opportunities to set and pursue academic and career goals are important things to consider. Additionally, the use of technology to help students plan and see their options is a trend that is important for MC to consider.			
Is MC's program aligned with current trends and best practices in the field, if not, provide an explanation? MC's General Studies program is a leader in terms of moving to a more focused intentional major, guided by the Guided Pathways and meta-major model.			
Based on the findings, what changes (additions or modifications) should this program consider?			

MC should continue to advance advising both in person and supported by technology and informational resources.

5. Program Advisory Committee and Articulation Agreements

- a. **Advisory Committee:** What is the current status of your program advisory board? Does the board meet regularly and include representation from appropriate industry and academia? How has the advisory committee helped inform and shape program development, modification, and evaluation?

We have been unable to form an advisory committee, at this time. We lack the contacts and resources to put an external advisor board together. However, we have internal faculty committees from the disciplines involved in General Studies which provide internal feedback and observation.

- b. **Articulation Agreements:** Examine the current formal articulation agreements and cooperative agreements that this program has with four year institutions, other community colleges, and high schools. How current are they? What additional agreements are planned, in process, or should be pursued? To address this question, use the information from the College's Articulation website: <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/departments.aspx?id=22488>

We are in the process of updating all General Studies articulation agreements. Our primary agreements with UMBC have been updated. The others are being reviewed.

- a. **Program and Student Perspective** Using a method identified by the program (e.g. focus group, survey or questionnaire in a required class), collect information from students in this program to better understand their educational experience. Potential topics to include are:

We implemented a Student Advisory Board and held 4 options for students to participate. There was consistency in feedback from the students in terms of their observations. Key themes:

- **Flexibility and Freedom of choice**
 - All the students appreciated the General Studies program because of its flexibility and their opportunity to put together a degree that suits their needs for transfer or exploration.
- **Sense of ownership**
 - Students noted as a positive that the General Studies degree gives them a level of responsibility and ownership of their educational journey.
- **Availability of resources**
 - The students noted the availability of resources on the College website, but wanted more information and more consistency. Because of the nature of the program, students felt they needed to do a lot of external research to map their curriculum. They expressed the need for more support in that exploration. The importance of having a consistent counselor or a consistent advisor was also noted. Also, the question of how to get more students to take advantage of existing resources was raised.
- **Discipline specific information**

- Several students indicated the importance of having discipline specific information and how much they valued the advice and perspective their instructional faculty offered about specific disciplines.
- **Preparation for next steps**
 - One concern students raised was a concern as to whether they are ready to go to a 4- year school or not.
- **Value of General Studies A.A. Degree**
 - Another concern and recommendation raised by students was a question of the value of completing a 2-year degree in General Studies in terms of listing it on a resume or completing the degree if a student only needed one or two classes and could transfer without completing those classes. A recommendation that we find better ways to communicate the value of the GS degree was also put forward.
- **Events and opportunities to connect**
 - All the students expressed interest in more events and opportunities to connect with other students. However, they did not have suggestions for effective ways to do this in terms of engaging their peers, and they acknowledged the difficulties of doing this.
- **Better ways to communicate**
 - When asked about how to communicate with them best, the students did not have concrete suggestions. They expressed frustration with the volume of email they get, and the difficulty of sorting through it. They suggested texts and social media, but felt it needed to be meaningful communication, as in related to something important, or they wouldn't pay attention.
- **Personal connections**
 - A final theme in the discussions was the importance of having personal connections to people at the College. Regardless of the role, instructional faculty, counseling faculty, or staff, students who had personal connections and worked regularly with someone felt that was a positive aspect of their experience and helped them be successful.

Section Two: Program Data:

- a. Have program data benchmarks been met? Address the College's benchmarks based on the institutional data provided. If all the benchmarks are not met, provide an explanation indicating action steps to meet data benchmarks in the future. Each degree track should be identified and addressed separately. *(Use the information to craft possible recommendations to address any unmet benchmarks).*

The General Studies Program developed a set of data based benchmarks for the first time in Summer 2015. At this point, it is too soon to tell whether we are meeting these specific 5 year benchmarks.

Program Goals (aligned with AA Division Priorities):

1. Implement new curriculum and General Studies leadership model to support student retention, success and completion (Priority 3.1, Priority 3.2)
2. Engage instructional and counselling faculty in activities and strategies to enhance student retention, success and completion including student materials and resources, instructional strategies, enhanced advising, recommended transfer pathways, and enhanced programming for General Studies students (Priority 1.2, Priority 3.1, Priority 3.2, Priority 4.3, Priority 5.2, Priority 5.3)
3. Decrease students enrolled in General Studies Major, appropriately, through program advising, approximately 15% (Priority 1.1)
4. Increase the number of students who graduate by 25% (Priority 1.1)
5. Increase the number of students who transfer by 25% (Priority 1.1)
6. Decrease time to completion to from an average of 4.1 years to 3 years (Priority 1.1)
7. Implement an online General Studies degree program with clear curricular pathways which can be completed in two years (Priority 3.1, Priority 3.2)

Program	Current Enrollment	5- year target	Current Graduation Totals	5- year Target	Current Transfer Rate	5- year target	Current time to completion	5 year target
					1,398			
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (w/out degree) 991 • (w/degree) 407 			

In addition to the above program benchmarks, we are also implementing a series of curriculum benchmarks and are looking at ways to measure and track those benchmarks.

By 15 Credits

- Meet with an Advisor
- Create General Studies Academic Plan
- Complete English 101 (or on completion of required prerequisite work)
- Complete Math Foundation (or on completion of required prerequisite work)
- Identify counseling and instructional faculty advisor

By 30 Credits

- Complete English Foundation course (or on completion of required prerequisite work)
- Complete at least one of each Gen Ed Requirement: NSLD/NSND, BSSD, HUMD, ARTD, GEIR
- For GENU Students, select core or alternate major
- Identify counseling and instructional faculty advisor
- Identify potential transfer institutions and review transfer requirements
- Update General Studies Academic Plan

By 45 Credits

- Apply for transfer based on transfer school deadlines, as appropriate
- Complete all General Education requirements
- Update General Studies Academic Plan
- Apply for graduation

By 60 Credits

- Complete General Studies graduation/program review survey
 - Using the data provided from EMSI: Industry Data, are there specific actions this program could take to improve career opportunities for their students, e.g., updating the curriculum, changes to the advisory board, changes in advising, etc.? (If yes, consider crafting a recommendation related to this information.)

No data provided.

Section Three: Future Directions: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats

Based on the information collected in the previous sections, conduct a SWOT analysis. Provide your answers in bullet format. From this SWOT analysis, use this information to craft possible recommendations.

- **Strengths:** What areas does the program excel? What are the advantages of the program? What do others see as the program's strengths?
- **Weakness:** What areas does the program not perform as desired? What is not functioning as well as it could? List any risks, needs, and demands for services that the program cannot currently meet.
- **Opportunities:** What factors are present that enable the program's future success?
- **Threats:** What external factors, to the College, if any, impact the program's future success?

Internal	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible with focus and rigor options for students • Addresses Middle States and CCRCCA concerns • Focus on goal setting and academic planning in addition to academics • Good leadership team • Opportunities to collaborate across areas 	<p>Weakness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in and engagement across the College • Consistent advising for students • Overlap with existing degrees and steering all students toward Gen Studies because it is easier • Resources to address needs of large number of students • Undecided students • Effectively use technology (starfish or other to support students) • More opportunities for non-traditional students and non-credit to credit degree pathways
-----------------	---	---

External	<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eportfolio • Zdegrees • Instructional Faculty Advising • Updated communication • Following national trends • Collaborations with disciplines and major programs • Be an example of best practices • Better and more transfer pathways • Increase students' labor/career potential 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of career focus- perception of the degree by employers • Overlap with existing degrees and perception that Gen Studies is easier and too many options (degrees/programs and courses) • Lack of value for Humanities • Lack of holistic advising • Understanding and buy in from faculty and disciplines • Inadequate training for instructional faculty for advising • No dedicated resources for Gen Studies program
-----------------	--	---

Section Four: External Peer Reviewer (To be completed as part of the program review)

- a. All programs that do not have an external accretor should include an external peer reviewer report. The reviewer will be responsible for reading your report and offering feedback and a written response relating to transferability/employability/and learning outcomes. It is suggested that the reviewer come from one of the schools in which our students most frequently transfer or our programs articulate.
- b. See additional handout explaining guidelines to conduct the external peer review visit.

Section Five: Complete the CAR/Academic Program Review Recommendations Report (separate form)

After completing this report, the program should synthesize the findings and identify recommendations for the future development of this program. These are high level action items that the program wishes to accomplish in the next five years. Your narrative report should justify these recommendations. Recommendations should reflect analyses and comments from sections one through four. Use the CAR/Academic Program Review Recommendations Report for your recommendations.

- General Guidelines when writing recommendations:
 - use action words.
 - indicate any known associated cost or cost estimates for recommendation implementation.
 - identify responsible person, by name, accountable for recommendation implementation.
- Recommendations should be:
 - implementable in the five-year time period.
 - reasonable and thoughtful based on program review reports, institutional data and faculty, staff, chairs, dean, and vice president and provost discussion.
 - measurable and outcomes oriented.
 - limited to ten or fewer.
 - aligned with MC 2020 Strategic Themes and Initiatives, where applicable.