

# GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MODELS PRESENTATION

THE GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFORM AND RESTRUCTURE COMMITTEE (GETRC)

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# Welcome – Discover, Connect, Progress

At the direction of Dr. Rai, the General Education Transform and Restructure Committee (GETRC) has been working with the Montgomery College community since January 2014 to develop model options for reform of the General Education program.

Today's presentation provides an opportunity to review the model options that have been developed by the GETRC in response to extensive input from the College community, changes to Maryland state law, and research into innovative pedagogical ideas currently reforming General Education programs nationwide.

This presentation, additional information on the General Education program at MC, and resources for additional reading are available at the GETRC LibGuide.

<http://libguides.montgomerycollege.edu/gened>

The LibGuide can also be accessed through the Academics section of the Montgomery College website.

<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department.aspx?id=60540>

# Why there is a need for structural reform

The need for structural reform of the College's General Education program is driven by two State of Maryland requirements:

New Maryland state law, **The College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act** (CCRCCA) of 2013 established new degree credit limitations and progress requirements for students.

Students must file a degree plan upon entering a community college.

The degree plan must establish a pathway system and graduation progress benchmarks for major programs, and for the General Education program.

Beginning in Fall 2015, Associate's degrees may not exceed **60 credits**, unless exemptions are granted when professional accreditation or certification standards require additional credits.

# Why there is a need for structural reform

The need for structural reform of the College's General Education program is driven by two State of Maryland requirements:

- In addition, MHEC is in the final stages of reviewing changes to the credits in its General Education requirements.
- It is expected that the range of credits for General Education programs in **AA**, **AS**, and **AAT** degrees will be reduced from the current 30-36 credits to **28-33 credits**.
- No changes are expected to the credit requirements for the AAS and AFA degrees.

## Model Options:

### AA and AAT Structural Reforms Based on MHEC Requirements

#### **MHEC Requirements - these must be part of any model**

- ENGL Foundation – 3 credits
- MATH Foundation – 3 credits
- ARTD – 3 credits
- HUMD – 3 credits
- BSSD – 6 credits
- NSLD – 4 credits
- NSND or NSLD – 3-4 credits

**Total Credits: 25-26**



- Some combination of **Institutional Requirements** may be added to MHEC's requirements in order to meet the expected required program credit range of **28-33** credits.
- MHEC's standards for distribution courses state that courses should be 3 credits. Therefore, Health courses are included as 3 credit courses.

## Model Options:

### AS Structural Reforms Based on MHEC Requirements

#### **MHEC Requirements - these must be part of any model**

- 
- ENGL Foundation – 3 credits
- MATH Foundation – 3 credits
- ARTD – 3 credits
- HUMD – 3 credits
- BSSD – 6 credits
- NSLD – 4 credits
- NSND or NSLD – 3-4 credits

**Total Credits: 25-26**



- At least 3 **General Education** credits need to be added to MHEC's requirements in order to meet the expected required program credit range of **28-33** credits.
- MHEC's standards for distribution courses state that courses should be 3 credits. Therefore, Health courses are included as 3 credit courses.

# General Education Program Vision

Based on feedback on institutional values and essential student skills from the more than 500 people who attended workshops and information sessions over the past year and research into current best practices in General Education programs at peer institutions across the country, GETRC moved toward the development of an **integrative model** for MC's General Education program, which is reflected in the draft program vision and outcomes.

Program vision highlights include:

- Ability to meet dynamic challenges
- Connected learning experiences
- Breadth of knowledge
- Inter-related skills for a changing world
- Rigorous, flexible program

*The full draft of the Program Vision is included at the end of this presentation.*

Full-time faculty will vote to either ratify the Program Vision or to have the General Education standing committee amend the Program Vision.

# General Education Program Outcomes

Based on college-wide input and the draft program vision, the GETRC developed the following Program Outcomes.

Upon completion of the General Education program, a student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of discipline specific inquiry and methodology to acquire foundation knowledge in content areas.
2. Apply integrative thinking across disciplines in order to solve complex problems through collaboration and the synthesis of knowledge.
3. Apply the principles and methodologies of a variety of disciplines to consider the ideas, history, values, and/or creative expression of various cultures within the global community.
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the skills needed to become self-confident, independent, lifelong learners, in order to meet the mental, physical, and ethical demands of personal and professional life.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of leadership skills that foster an active commitment to civic and social responsibility.

Full-time faculty will vote to either ratify the Program Outcomes or to have the General Education Standing Committee amend the Program Outcomes.

# What is an integrative model?

An integrative model approach has a number of benefits for students and for the College:

- Integrative models recognize and emphasize natural interdisciplinary connections that already exist in an institution.
- Integrative models reinforce the emphasis on what students know and can do with that knowledge.
- Integrative models introduce essential skills and content knowledge in a mutually reinforcing way.
- Integrative models provide **pathways** or **themes** that allow an individual student to develop a focused and intentional pathway through the General Education program, while allowing the College to retain the breadth and diversity of its academic offerings for all students
- **Pathways** or **themes** foster a student's ability to see the full arc of their educational experience, and make connections between between their academic learning, their co-curricular experiences, and their lives beyond school.

# Thematic Pathways and the Introductory Concentration

To help students make connections between the courses they choose, the model includes an **Introductory Concentration** of distribution courses that will be determined by the academic disciplines. The Introductory Concentration will include courses from all four of the Distribution Areas, and these courses will have the following characteristics:



- Broadly introductory
- Typically 100 level (with some exceptions)
- Broadly transferable
- May be required for degrees in multiple majors

The model will also include four **Thematic Pathways** that emphasize connections among the General Education course choices and help students understand the relevance of what they are learning. Academic disciplines will be asked to align their distribution area courses with these content-appropriate Thematic Pathways or to an Introductory Concentration.



Global  
Perspectives  
and Awareness



Creativity,  
Exploration,  
and Discovery



Ethics and  
Social  
Responsibility



The Human  
Condition

# Thematic Pathways



## **Global Awareness and Perspectives**

*Courses in this Pathway will consider how different disciplines explore international issues from various cultural perspectives.*



## **Creativity, Exploration and Discovery**

*Courses in this Pathway will consider the ways different disciplines use creative problem solving to forge new ways of thinking and understanding the world.*



## **Ethics and Social Responsibility**

*Courses in this Pathway will consider ways in which different disciplines examine how individual and societal values are shaped and experienced.*



## **The Human Condition**

*Courses in this Pathway will consider how different disciplines explore physical, social and cultural aspects of the human experience*

Students may also choose to develop their own **Custom Pathway** in consultation with an advisor.

Full-time faculty will vote to permit disciplines to apply for a Distribution course to be included in only one Thematic Pathway, or to permit disciplines to apply for a Distribution course to be included in two Thematic Pathways.

# Thematic Pathways

An online survey of 163 students indicated the following levels of interest in the Thematic Pathway categories:



Global Awareness and Perspectives



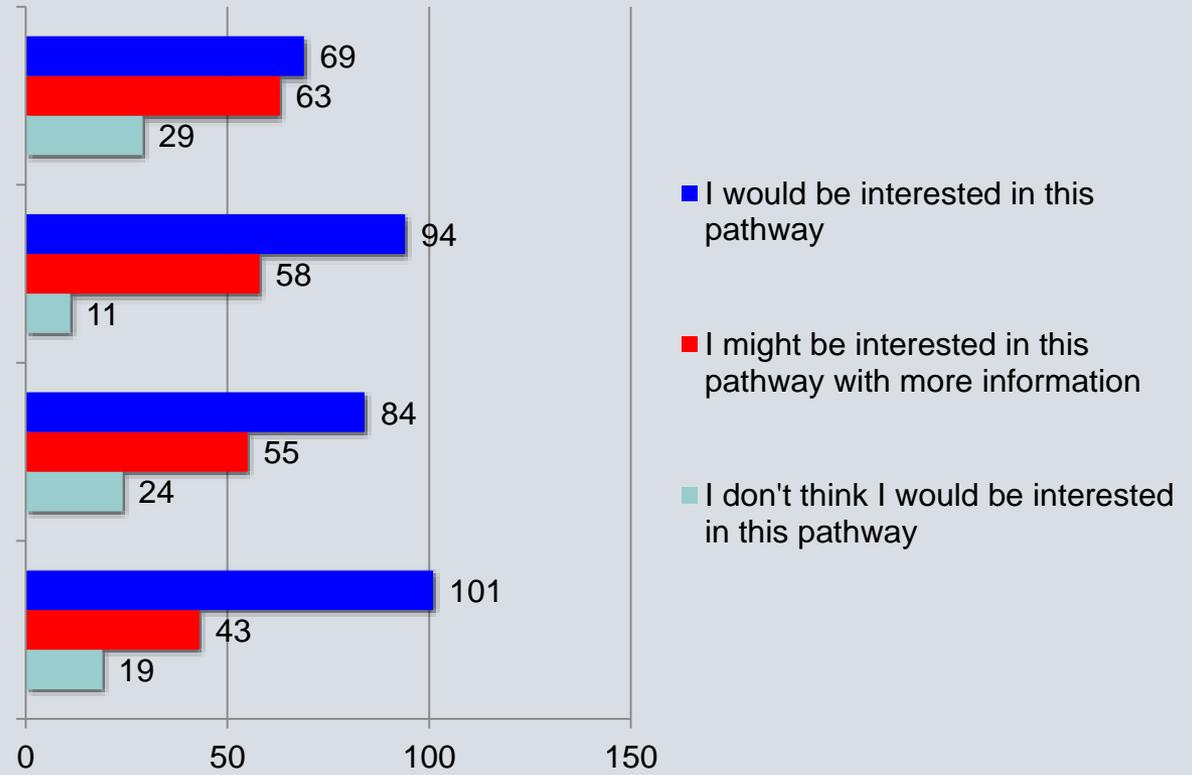
Creativity, Exploration, and Discovery



Ethics and Social Responsibility



The Human Condition



# Thematic Pathways and the Introductory Concentration

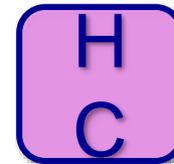
MHEC requires **6** distribution courses in General Education programs for the AA, AS and AAT degrees. Students will **advised** to select:

**3** distribution courses from the **Introductory Concentration**



and

**3** distribution courses from one of the **Thematic Pathways** or **Custom Pathway** to complete the Distribution requirements of the General Education program.



*The organizing of Distribution courses into an Introductory Concentration and Thematic Pathways is a pedagogical approach to help students understand the connections between their courses. It will be supported by academic advising and will allow the program to satisfy the pathway requirement in the CCRCCA. However, it is the completion of the MHEC Distribution Area requirements that will continue to be the requirement for graduation.*

# How an integrative model might incorporate Co-Curricular activities

## Co-Curricular Activities with Global Awareness and Perspectives Designation

- Athenaeum Symposia: Ambassador Rasool, South Africa
  - Global Connections Presentation: African Heritage Month
  - GHI: “Latin America in Montgomery County: Local Cultures with Global Connections”
- In an integrative model, co-curricular activities are aligned with thematic pathways in order to provide students with a rich array of learning opportunities from outside of the formal curriculum, such as lectures, student clubs, workshops, athletics, and honor societies.
  - Through participation in these activities and completing structured reflective writing about them, students are able to connect their academic learning to their lives beyond the classroom and develop skills as leaders, team members, global citizens and more.

Full-time faculty will vote to either **require** students to complete structured reflections derived from a co-curricular activity or activities that relate to one or more of their General Education courses, or to make these activities and structured reflections **optional** for students.

# Integrative Models and High Impact Practices

Integrative models also incorporate **High Impact Practices**- teaching and learning strategies that have been shown to have substantial benefits, especially for underserved students.

In addition to co-curricular activities, the model will focus initially on incorporating the following high impact practices.

## **Introduction to General Education**

An online, interactive, mobile friendly “Introduction to General Education” module will be developed for use in student orientations and as a resource for students in General Education courses.

## **Signature Assignments**

- Courses in the General Education program will be required to include one or more signature assignments in the course curriculum that will provide opportunities for students to develop artifacts (assignments and student reflections) that can be added to their General Education portfolios.
- Signature assignments will be developed by the disciplines and will employ course content to introduce students to targeted General Education competencies and proficiencies.

# What are Electronic Portfolios?

A third high impact practice that voters are being asked to consider is the use of program level e-Portfolios.

- Program level e-Portfolios provide an institution-wide digital platform for student developed and owned sites that collect evidence of student learning **from a range of courses over time and in multiple formats and contexts.**
- e-Portfolios would be “student owned” and portable, with artifacts chosen and uploaded by the students.
- Portfolio requirements would include representative artifacts of student work and structured reflection pieces that explain why a particular artifact was chosen for the portfolio.
- Students, faculty, and staff would have broad institutional support for e-Portfolios through academic learning centers, libraries, e-resources, and workshops.
- The use of e-Portfolios would reflect the institution’s academic and ethical standards, and Federal compliance requirements.

# Program Level Electronic Portfolios and Assessment

Assessment for General Education could be addressed through cyclical **random sampling** of program level e-Portfolios conducted by a trained, multi-disciplinary faculty assessment cadre.

Instructional faculty would be responsible for developing and implementing signature assignments in their classes that provide opportunities for students to develop potential artifacts and structured reflection pieces for their e-Portfolios

## Assessment artifacts for e-Portfolios would include:

- Signature assignments that reflect distribution-aligned competencies and proficiencies, and progressive rigor
- Structured self-reflection opportunities for students that explain the significance of an artifact chosen for the portfolio

## Assessment artifacts for e-Portfolios would provide:

- Evidence of student learning with regard to competencies, proficiencies, and program outcomes
- Evidence of discipline innovations and changes based on student learning data
- Evidence that courses continue to reflect foundation or distribution outcomes and program requirements

## Integrative Model Features

Implement an Introductory Concentration (IC) and Thematic Pathways Courses may apply to be included in the Introductory Concentration (based on IC criteria) or in the Thematic Pathways.

An online, interactive, mobile-friendly “Introduction to General Education” module will be developed for use in student orientations and as a resource for students and faculty in General Education Courses.

In order to engage students in high impact practices, all courses will continue to include signature assignments. These assignments should reflect discipline aligned competencies and proficiencies, and progressive 100 level/200 level rigor.

All current General Education courses will be required to apply to continue to participate in the General Education program and new courses will be able to apply to participate in the program.

All General Education courses will be required to apply for re-certification every 6 years.

Course recertification will include evidence of innovations and changes based on student learning data, and the recertification application will include evidence that the course continues to reflect foundation or distribution outcomes and General Education program requirements. Disciplines may, at that time, choose to re-evaluate in which Thematic Pathway reside.

The model will continue to require that in all AA and AS curricula, students will be required to select at least one course with a global and cultural perspectives designation

High transfer courses will continue to be identified and communicated to students and to academic disciplines. MC institutional standards for transferability remain in place.

## Integrative Model Voting Options

<p>Ratify Program Vision</p>		<p>Amend Program Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for changes should be sent to the General Education standing committee</li> </ul>
<p>Ratify Program Outcomes</p>		<p>Amend Program Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for changes should be sent to the General Education standing committee</li> </ul>
<p>Pilot e-Portfolios for General Education as a possible student learning and assessment tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the restructured General Education program will include participation in the General Studies e-Portfolio pilot.</li> <li>• The General Education standing committee would work with the General Studies leadership team to co-develop pilot materials and processes.</li> </ul>		<p>Defer pilot of e-Portfolios for General Education until the completion of the General Studies e-Portfolio pilot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual faculty teaching General Education courses may choose to participate in the General Studies pilot.</li> <li>• If the General Studies pilot results in the adoption of an e-Portfolio requirement, the General Education standing committee will work with the General Studies leadership team to adapt the General Studies e-Portfolio model for General Education needs.</li> </ul>
<p>As part of the new course application or existing course re-certification process, courses may apply to be in one Thematic Pathway or the Introductory Concentration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting distribution courses to a single Thematic Pathway will narrow student choices in a focused area of interest.</li> <li>• Signature assignments for all sections of a course in a single Thematic Pathway will feature connections to the theme of that pathway.</li> </ul>		<p>As part of the new course application or existing course re-certification process, Courses may apply to be in up to two thematic pathways or the Introductory Concentration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including courses in multiple Thematic Pathways allows for more student choice within a pathway, but may make choosing among them more difficult.</li> <li>• Signature assignments for all sections of a course in two Thematic Pathways will be need to be able to feature connections to the themes of both pathways</li> </ul>
<p>Students will be required to complete structured reflections derived from a co-curricular activity or activities that relate to one or more of their General Education Courses</p>		<p>Students will have the option to complete structured reflections derived from a co-curricular activity or activities that relate to one or more of their General Education Courses</p>

# General Education Program Vision

Based upon the conviction that in order to be well-rounded individuals who are prepared to succeed in college and to meet dynamic challenges in the workforce and the world, Montgomery College has made the General Education program a component of every degree program. Through a range of connected learning experiences, the General Education program introduces students to a breadth of knowledge that complements the depth provided in a completed degree program. The goal of the General Education program is to provide all students, in both career and transfer curricula, with the foundation to live productive lives, to be global citizens, to appreciate aesthetic values, and to engage in life-long learning in a continually changing world. To that end, the General Education program includes foundation courses that provide the basis for excellence and success in all courses, as well as distribution courses that allow students to explore how learning is integrated across the arts and humanities, behavioral and social sciences, and natural sciences.

Through engagement in high impact educational practices and completion of the General Education program, students will demonstrate ability in five areas of competency:

- Written and oral communication,
- Scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency,
- Information literacy.

As proficiencies, students will also develop:

- An awareness of the arts
- An understanding of their personal, social, and civic responsibilities as members of a global community.

In order to provide a rigorous, yet flexible, program to develop these inter-related abilities, thematically linked distribution courses have been grouped into focused thematic pathways. Students may choose to select their courses from among themes that emphasize an area of focus in consultation with an advisor.

# General Education Program Outcomes

Upon completion of the General Education program, a student will be able to:

**Demonstrate an awareness of discipline specific inquiry and methodology to acquire foundation knowledge in content areas.**

- Competencies: Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning; Critical Analysis and Reasoning
- Proficiencies: Arts and Aesthetic Awareness

**Apply integrative thinking across disciplines in order to solve complex problems through collaboration and the synthesis of knowledge.**

- Competencies: Written and Oral Communication; Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning; Critical Analysis and Reasoning; Technological Competency; Information Literacy
- Proficiencies: Arts and Aesthetic Awareness; Personal, Social and Civic Responsibility

**Apply the principles and methodologies of a variety of disciplines to consider the ideas, history, values, and/or creative expression of various cultures within the global community.**

- Competencies: Written and Oral Communication; Critical Analysis and Reasoning; Technological Competency; Information Literacy
- Proficiencies: Arts and Aesthetic Awareness; Personal, Social and Civic Responsibility

**Demonstrate an awareness of the skills needed to become self-confident, independent, lifelong learners, in order to meet the mental, physical, and ethical demands of personal and professional life.**

- Competencies: Written and Oral Communication; Critical Analysis and Reasoning; Technological Competency; Information Literacy
- Arts and Aesthetic Awareness; Personal, Social and Civic Responsibility

**Demonstrate an understanding of leadership skills that foster an active commitment to civic and social responsibility.**

- Competencies: Critical Analysis and Reasoning; Technological Competency; Information Literacy
- Proficiencies: Personal, Social and Civic Responsibility