



TO: University of Vermont Faculty

FROM: Patricia A. Prelock, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President

DATE: August 20, 2019

SUBJECT: General Education Alignment Task Force

UVM recently completed a comprehensive self-study as part of its decennial institutional reaccreditation under the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE). This process allowed us to identify institutional strengths, opportunities and areas for improvement, as well as measure UVM's policies, practices and curricula against the [NECHE standards for accreditation](#). In this process, it became clear that General Education at UVM falls short of realizing the intent of standard 4.16 (emphasis added):

The general education requirement is *coherent and substantive*. It embodies the *institution's* definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live. The requirement informs the design of all general education courses, and provides criteria for its evaluation, including the *assessment of what students learn*.

In addition, UVM's current 15 credits of centrally approved and assessed General Education requirements (D1/D2; FWIL; QR and SU) do not meet the expected 40 credits (as stated in Standard 4.18) and do not cover the three broad areas outlined within Standard 4.17 (Arts and Humanities; Social Sciences; and Natural Sciences including Math).

To bring UVM's curriculum into alignment with the NECHE standards, and to ensure that our students benefit from a unified curriculum that defines a "UVM education," I have charged a General Education Alignment Task Force to develop a proposal for expanded, University-level general education requirements. The Task Force is chaired by J. Dickinson, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs.

In the coming year, the General Education Alignment Task Force will offer regular updates on its progress to the Faculty Senate. Early in Spring 2020, they will present a comprehensive proposal to move UVM's general education curriculum from 15 to 40 credits. Throughout Spring 2020, the Task Force will consult with the Faculty Senate to review, discuss and achieve agreement on an overall General Education vision and requirements.

This is a large and complex undertaking, and so the Alignment Task Force reflects faculty strengths across our schools and colleges, and deep knowledge of General Education at UVM. Members of the Task Force will be visiting college/school faculty meetings this Fall to discuss the process with you and gather input and ideas as they develop the initial proposal.

I encourage faculty to reach out to the task force representative in their college or school to share thoughts on the educational components that all of our students should have as part of their UVM experience.

Task Force Membership:

J. Dickinson, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (Task Force Chair)

Barbara Arel, GSB representative

Rosemary Dale, CNHS representative

Jeff Frolick, CEMS representative

Joel Goldberg, CAS representative

Cathy Paris, CALS representative and Faculty Senate Executive Committee representative

Joan Rosebush, General Education Coordinating Committee representative

Katharine Shepherd, CESS representative

Allan Strong, RSENr representative

cc: Suresh Garimella, President