



May 2024

Dear members of the Kean University community,

On behalf of our constituencies on the General Education Task Force and the University Senate's GE Committee, we want to thank you for your attentiveness to the effort underway to reform Kean's GE curriculum. As you know, this project was initiated in Spring 2022 and we are grateful for your patience and contributions as the process plays out.

We wanted to take this opportunity to impress upon you the importance of everyone playing an active role in this enormous task of full curriculum reform and implementation. The GE Task Force and the University Senate GE Committee have come together this Spring 2024 to reach out broadly to the full campus – to students, faculty, staff and administration, to the multi-form and far-reaching constituencies that both make up the present GE Program, and those that are served by it – to better identify the shared aspirations that the Kean community has for a reformed GE. We also must identify shortcomings/problems within the existing program, while imagining workable, viable solutions to such challenges. On April 15th we launched a series of informational sessions and consultative conversations – the first of which (attended by 93 colleagues) focused on the *History of GE at Kean* – with the second and third installments of our jointly-sponsored sessions coming up at the end of this month:

- *GE Reform in the USA: Trends and Best Practices* -- Wednesday, May 22, noon - 1:30pm on Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7328870568>
- *The Future of GE at Kean: Identifying Campus-Wide Needs* -- Wednesday, May 29, 3:30 - 5pm in CAS 106. Please [pre-register here](#).

While the May 22 event will be a traditional presentation, the May 29 meeting is intended to be more interactive; we aim to listen and learn, to deepen our understanding of the full campus community's experience with GE at Kean, attentive to what needs to be kept in place and strengthened, and also what needs to be changed and reformed. These three sessions, considered collectively, have three fundamental goals: 1) to inform the campus community about GE – both at Kean and nationwide; 2) to encourage broader-based participation of the campus community, so that decisions concerning the future directions of GE are both representative and inclusive; and 3) to help set the foundations for the drafting of a preliminary program proposal, a *Concept Document*, to be written in Summer 2024, that clearly articulates a vision, a structure and an implementation strategy for GE reform.

In preparation for that conversation, please consider the following prompts and come to the gathering on May 29 with some ideas already formulated.

- What are your aspirations for the next iteration of Kean's GE program?
- What components are necessary to achieve those aspirations?

- What are your best hopes/worst fears for GE reform?
- What is GE's full curricular reach 'vertically'? Consider its relationship to 'developmental' (college-readiness) curriculum as well as its relationship to Majors/Minors/Concentrations, etc. on the upper-class levels.
- If GE is the quintessential and universal Kean student experience, what should be GE's reach outside of the classroom & its curriculum?
- What might be the themes and focus for a thriving GE Program?

To help you frame your thoughts, we are sharing with you two resources. First, you have heard the Provost and members of the GE Task Force mention the three pedagogical pillars which we imagine supporting the new GE curriculum. To make sure that we're all using the same definitions for the pillars, Dr. Liza Bolitzer and Prof. Karen Villanueva, both members of the GE Task Force, have drafted a useful document, *Proposed Key Pedagogies of the GE Curriculum*, found on the landing page of the GE Task Force's website.

Please note that originally, the three pillars were identified as:

1. Place-based learning
2. Inquiry-based learning
3. Experiential learning

After the work done during Summer 2023 by the Transdisciplinary Teams, the GE Task Force's Executive Committee replaced "place-based" with "engaging students' knowledge." Given that place-based learning doesn't rightfully qualify as a pedagogy, this substitution was made. This now makes the three pillars as follows:

1. Engaging students' knowledge
2. Inquiry-based learning
3. Experiential learning

The second resource that we'd like to share is the American Association of Colleges & Universities' (AAC&U) list of High-Impact Practices (HIPs). For many years, this list has served as a reference for Kean's General Education Program, giving its leadership guidance towards the best practices most likely to address discoveries made as a result of GE assessment. Some of the following HIPs are already employed by Kean as strategic components to meet identified student needs. Others are ones we might wish to consider when redesigning the content and form of the new GE curriculum.

- Capstone Courses & Projects
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Diversity/Global Learning
- First Year Seminars & Experiences
- Service Learning, Community-based Learning
- Undergraduate Research
- Collaborative Assignments & Projects
- e-Portfolios
- Internships
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses

We look forward to seeing you on Zoom on May 22; We'll see you in-person in CAS 106 on May 29 – Remember to [pre-register](#).

If you have any questions, observations, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. May your summer start smoothly,

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and

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