

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with the work of the General Education Taskforce (GETF) this spring, and shared feedback through completing surveys or individual conversations. The feedback provided included three key areas of insights, summarized below.

The GETF is currently using this feedback to further develop the proposed new general education curriculum, and will continue to share our progress with the college community. We are also conducting individual meetings with representatives from the current General Education curriculum.

For more information on the GE Taskforce, the representatives from each college and the process of development, please see:

<https://www.kean.edu/offices/academic-affairs/general-education-curriculum-task-force>

What excites people about the new proposed curriculum, centered on inquiry, experience and place?

Break from traditional forms of learning: Several faculty express excitement about the new GE curriculum and its departure from the traditional curriculum. They appreciate the emphasis on hands-on and active learning, inquiry-based learning, and place-based learning and the potential benefits of students exploring their interests.

Integrated and interdisciplinary approach: There is appreciation for the integrated and interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum, which is believed to be a pathway to enable students to make connections across different fields of study and develop skills that will be relevant to many disciplines.

Support for students: Faculty appreciate the increased support for tutoring and supplemental instruction, as well as the ability for students to explore and change majors without losing time. They also appreciate the potential for building community through cohort models and strengthening social infrastructure.

Relevance for the future: The focus on developing skills that will be relevant to the uncertain future and the changing job market is mentioned. Faculty believe that the new curriculum will set more students up for success and give them tangible experiences.

What aspects of this curriculum are already underway at Kean University?

Faculty described currently applying principles or practices of the proposed curriculum in several ways:

Experiential learning: Faculty described facilitating experiential learning in several ways, including field trips, networking, internships, design competitions, field study research, Events with professional organizations, mock court cases, debates, mock financial situations, lab work (skills lab, simulation lab, science lab), and shadowing of professionals.

Place-based learning: Faculty described using place-based learning in two primary ways: Virtual and physical. Virtual PBL (in the form of computer servers mirroring those found in industrial settings) provides a controlled environment for students to work and learn. Physical examples of PBL include both “structured” and “unstructured” outings. Structured outings include visits to medical clinics, schools and classrooms, offices, and seats of government and unstructured outings tend to be more exploratory in nature and focus more on the observation and analysis of the physical characteristics of a given place or site. Whether they are physical or virtual, structured, or unstructured, PBL as it is currently utilized by respondents offers students direct, hands-on experiences and engagement.

In implementing both experiential and place-based learning, faculty emphasized the importance of advanced planning and resources. They described a desire for stronger working relationships with NJ corporations and businesses to gain more internships, funding, less barriers to team teaching, administrative support and transportation support.

What concerns do people have about the new proposed curriculum?

Faculty’s concerns about the new, proposed curriculum focus on three major areas:

Effect on completion of the major: Faculty are concerned about how the new curriculum will work with the requirements of various majors and students’ ability to explore majors early in their college career.

Logistics: Faculty expressed concern about the pace that the curriculum is being developed and whether all logistical issues will be addressed before implementation. These included, primarily: accessibility, planning of “off-campus activities”, impact on accreditation, and transfer credits. Faculty also raised concerns about how the new curriculum will work with current faculty work-loads.

Fit for Kean students: Faculty expressed concern about how this curriculum will serve the Kean student population, including ESL and SUPERA students, commuter students and part-time students.