

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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To: Members of the Core Curriculum 2025 Committee

From: Rachel Croson, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Thomas Chase, Chair, Senate Committee on Educational Policy

Date: January 19, 2022

Re: Committee Charge

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Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Core Curriculum 2025 Committee, which has the important task of developing recommendations for a new or revised general education program that could be required of all undergraduates on the Twin Cities campus who are admitted in Fall 2025 and beyond. You were invited to serve on this committee because of your interest and experience in undergraduate education and because you represent an important undergraduate education constituency.

You are no doubt aware of the history of general education reforms at the University including the Howe Committee (1991) that established the current liberal education diversified core and designated themes system, the Schiff Committee (2008) that renewed the commitment to the diversified core and designated themes model, but with some changes, the Kohlstedt Committee (2019) that recommended changes to the Liberal Education requirements which were not adopted by the faculty senate, and the 2021 change to require that every student take the Race, Power and Justice in the United States designated theme.

Taken together, the current liberal education system has been in place with only minimal adjustments at the University for close to 30 years. Since 1991, students, their employers, faculty and indeed the entire world have undergone significant changes. We feel that it is time for our university to examine, in a modern context, questions of what students need to learn and what a modern general education program at a comprehensive R-1 flagship university should look like to best prepare our students for a complex world.

We encourage the committee to be bold in its thinking and recommendations, and not to be constrained by the current Liberal Education requirements, the University budget model, or other perceived barriers that could stand in the way of education reform. At the same time, the committee's recommendation should be appropriate for the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities.

We encourage the committee to consult broadly and regularly with stakeholders, including at least: (a) undergraduate students, (b) faculty in the undergraduate degree-granting colleges, (c) faculty in the professional schools, (d) advisors, (e) relevant administrators, and (f) representatives from industries that employ our students. We hope that your final recommendations will not be just the consensus of your committee but also will be the result of a broad consensus among these important groups. With

this in mind, we also encourage the committee to be open in its deliberations and to be regular in reporting on its discussions and recommendations to the University community.

Along with the above guidelines, we hope the committee work will include the following tasks:

1. Examine general education models at peer universities, including universities with models that are quite different from the current University of Minnesota model.
2. Examine the role of communication in general education and determine whether and how the Writing Enriched Curriculum might be incorporated into new University general education communication requirements.
3. Determine the appropriate number of credits in the general education requirements and ensure that any new general education program will not negatively impact graduation rates and will allow students to complete the work in their major while still offering sufficient space for electives.
4. Consider how any new general education requirements might impact transfer students entering the University through the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.
5. Develop a set of measurable outcome metrics for the new general education program, and a plan to use those metrics as part of a periodic assessment of the program.
6. Without being constrained by the current University budget model, consider the fiscal implications of your proposed program, recognizing that the University must continue to be fiscally responsible in the delivery of its educational mission.
7. Recommend a management and oversight system for the general education program, including how courses might be approved for inclusion in the program and how courses might be periodically examined to determine if they are still relevant.

It is likely that this list will evolve as the committee proceeds with its work.

The committee will be coordinated and staffed through the Office of Undergraduate Education. The committee should feel free to invite relevant students, faculty, administrators, and industry stakeholders to join committee meetings if they can provide information that might be useful for committee discussions. If needed, the committee may also request the short-term retention of an external higher-education curriculum expert consultant to advise the committee on matters related to general education.

The committee will begin its work early in the Spring 2022 semester. We would like progress reports of your activities in May 2022 and November 2022. We encourage you to also update the University community by regular appearances at the relevant student and faculty governance bodies and if requested, at one or more University Senate meetings. We look forward to your committee delivering a draft final report of your findings and recommendations to the University community on or before March 15, 2023, and, after receiving feedback from the community, your final report on or before June 1, 2023.

Thank you again for agreeing to be on this committee that is charged with recommending what all our undergraduate students should learn. We can think of no activity that is more core to the educational mission of the University of Minnesota.