

Rethinking General Education

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Today's Agenda

-
- Project Overview
 - Group Ideation & Feedback
 - Tasks & Timeline
 - Questions





PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **Interim Provost's Vision and Charge to Task Force**
- **Trends in General Education**
- **Current State at Pitt**
- **Task Force Composition**

Interim Provost's Vision and Charge



Joseph J. McCarthy

Interim Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

Pitt Gen Ed

AAC&U Survey: What Shapes College Learning and Student Success

Percentage of Stakeholders Reporting Common Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate Students



Percentage of Stakeholders Reporting Common Learning Outcomes by Institutional Type

84% of four-year private institutions have common learning outcomes...

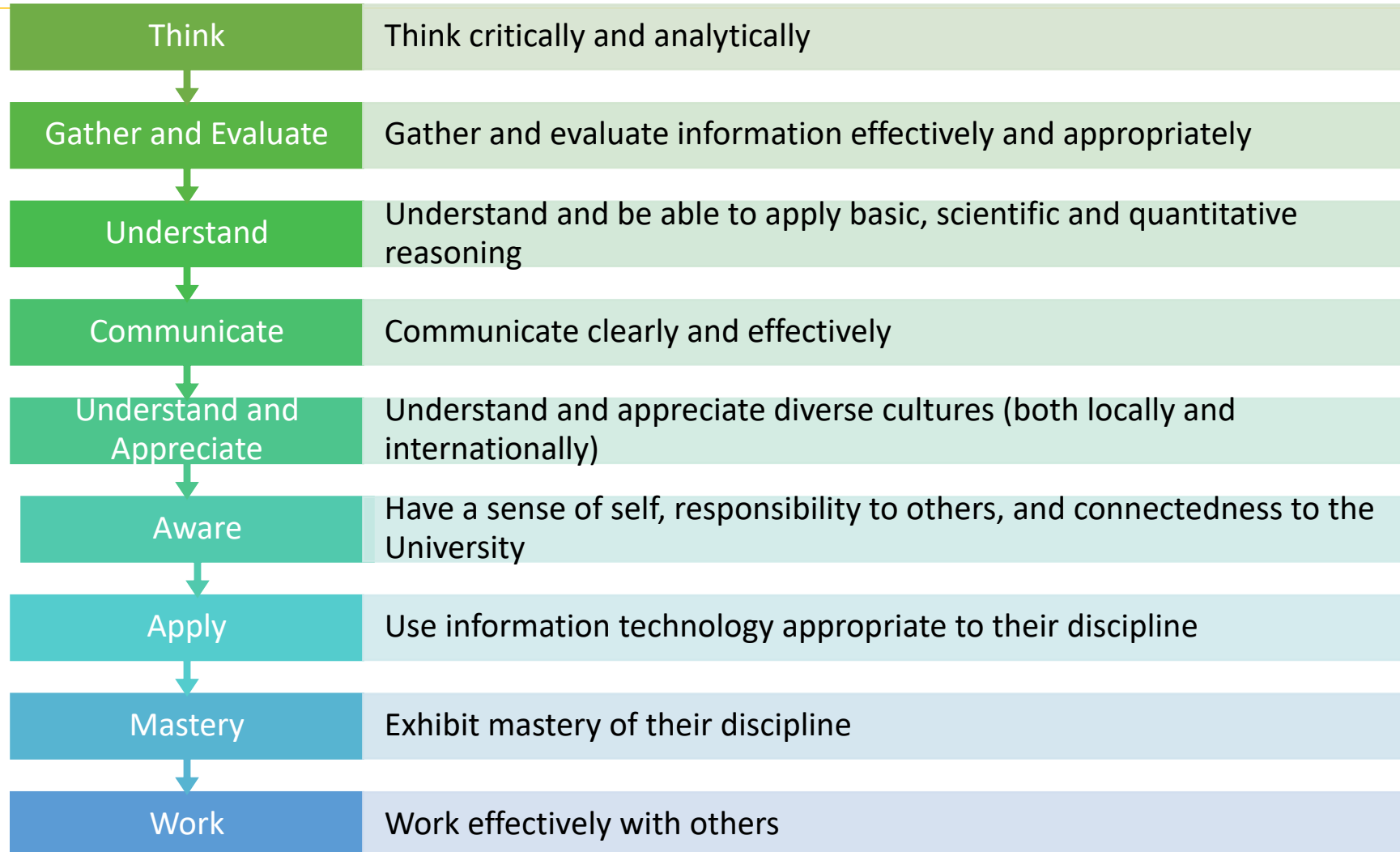


...but only **78%** of four-year public institutions do.

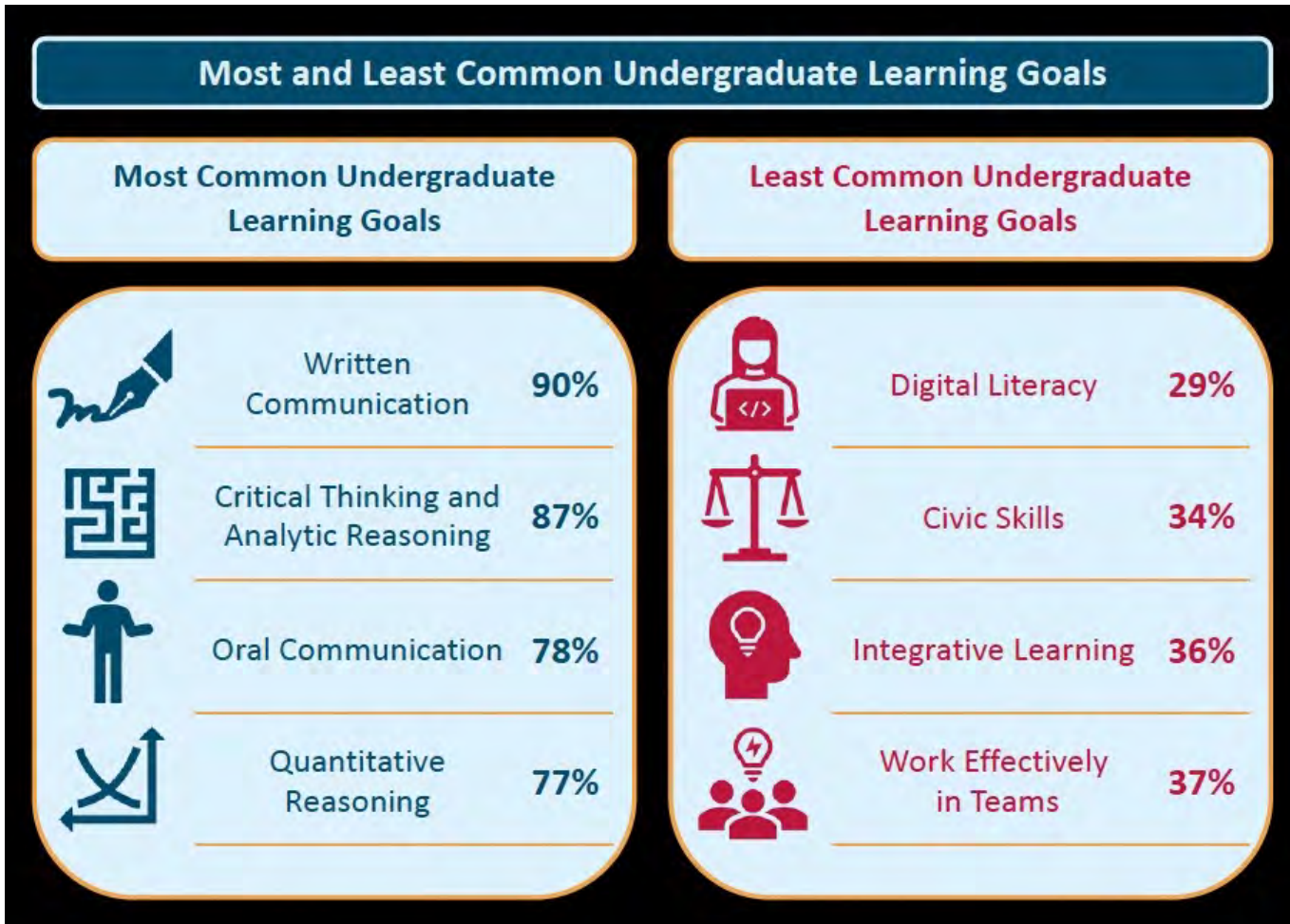
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On the Same Page? Administrator and Faculty Views on What Shapes College Learning and Student Success. Association of American Colleges and Universities. February 15, 2022.

Pitt General Learning Outcomes (last reviewed in 2006!)



AAC&U Survey: What Shapes College Learning and Student Success



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How confident are you that the majority of Pitt faculty understand our existing general learning outcomes for undergraduate education?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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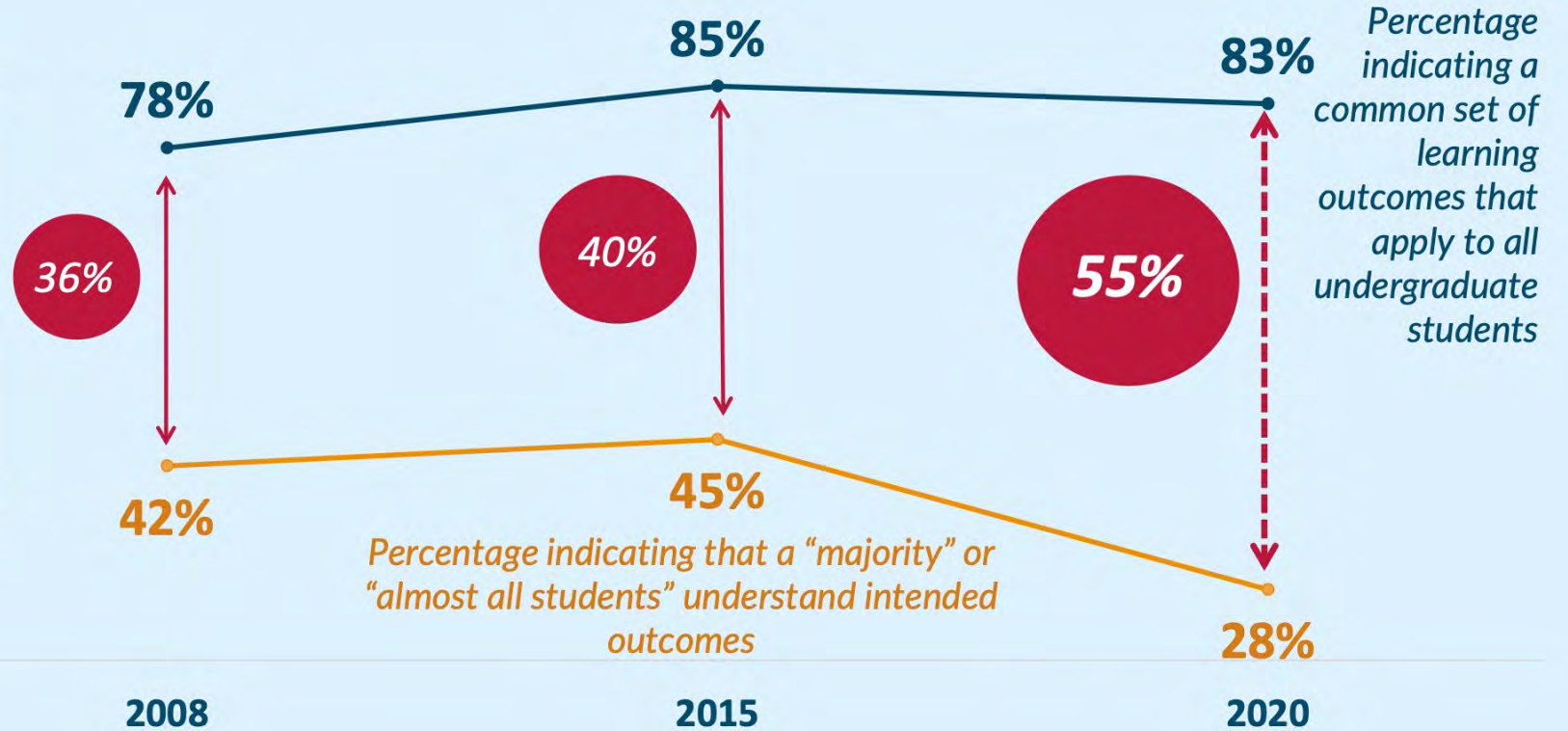


How confident are you that the majority of Pitt undergraduate students understand our existing general learning outcomes?

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AAC&U Survey: What Shapes College Learning and Student Success

Percentage of Stakeholders Who Report Having a Common Set of Learning Outcomes vs. Percentage of Students Believed to Understand Outcomes



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As Beth McMurtrie writes in this issue, “it comes down to thinking hard about a fundamental question: What is the purpose of the whole undergraduate experience your college offers? The time is ripe for that thought exercise because policymakers are demanding an answer. But you can’t just tell them that a broad-based liberal education creates problem-solving innovators and engaged citizens; you must say how.”

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Gen Ed Is Broken

“Why am I taking this class?” Colleges need better answers.

Trends in General Education



General Education 1.0

Sciences

Social
Sciences

Arts and
Humanities

Distribution Model

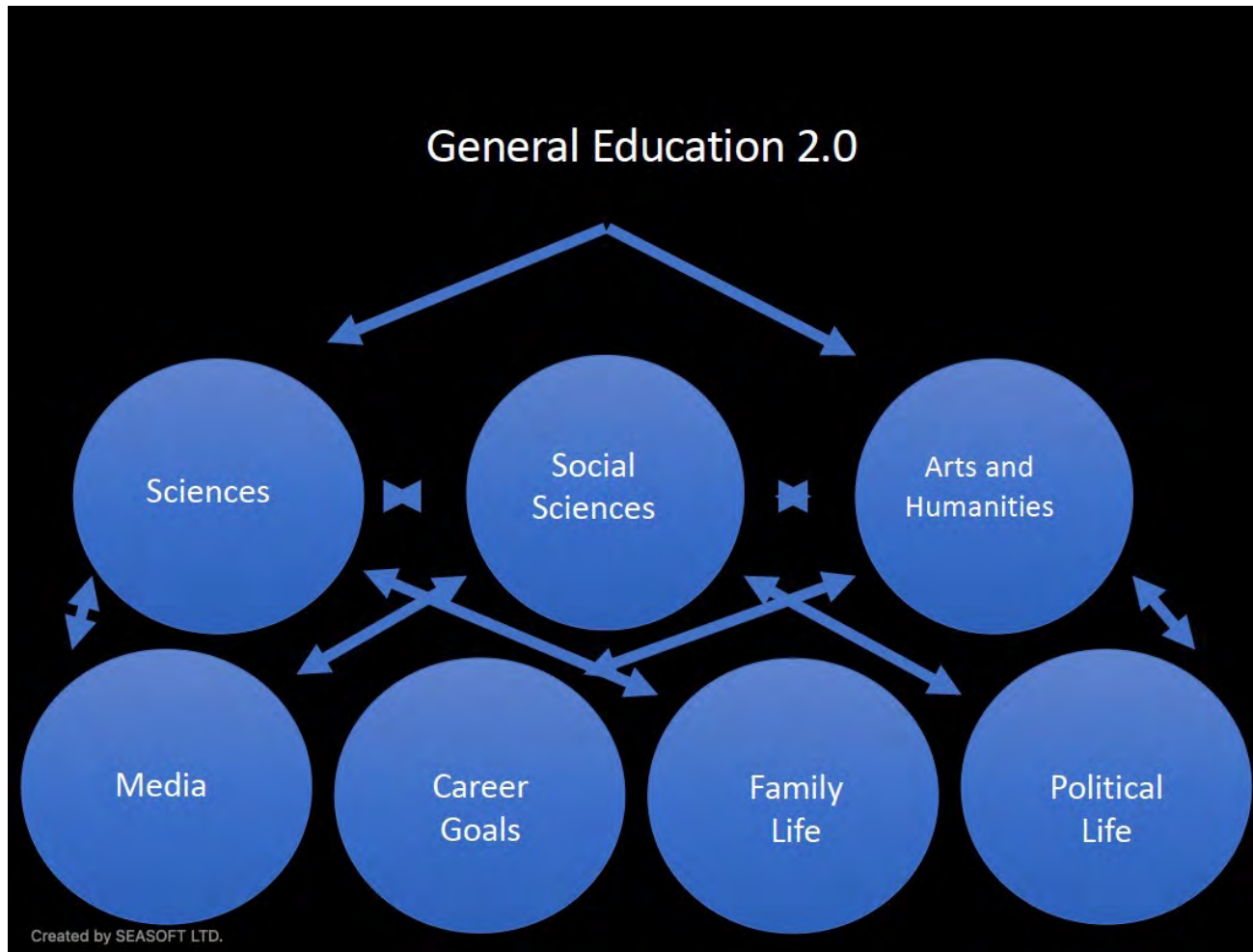
2 courses social sciences
2 courses arts & humanities
2 courses mathematics
2 courses natural sciences
2 courses foreign language
2 courses physical
education

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Hanstedt P. (2012). *General education essentials : a guide for college faculty*. Jossey-Bass.

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Trends in General Education

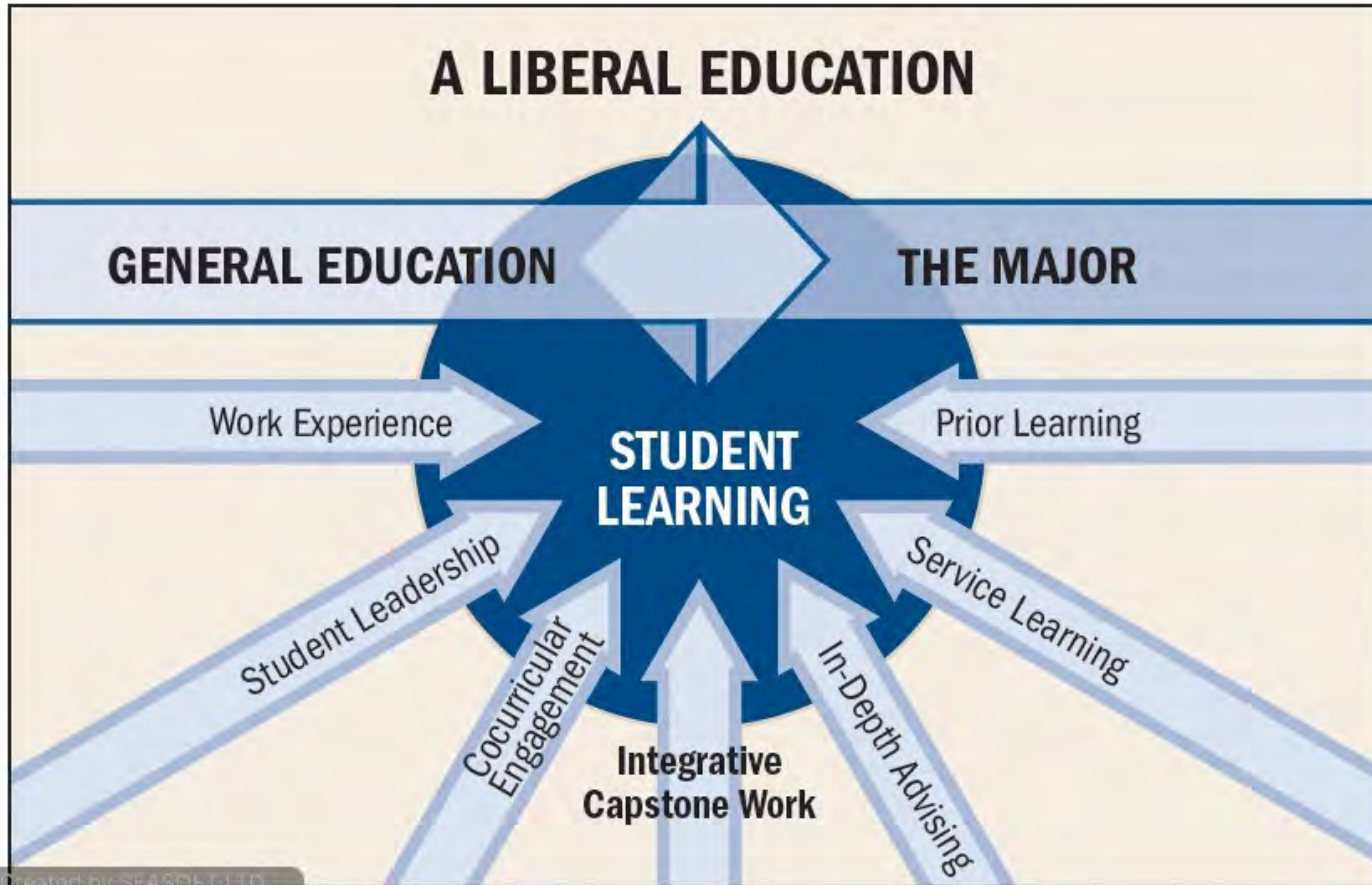


Integrative Model

- Enable intellectual growth
- Provide opportunities for reflection and self-awareness
- Develop knowledge and transferable skills
- Offer platform for in-depth study in the major
- Prioritize experiential learning, high-impact practices

Pitt Gen Ed

Trends in General Education



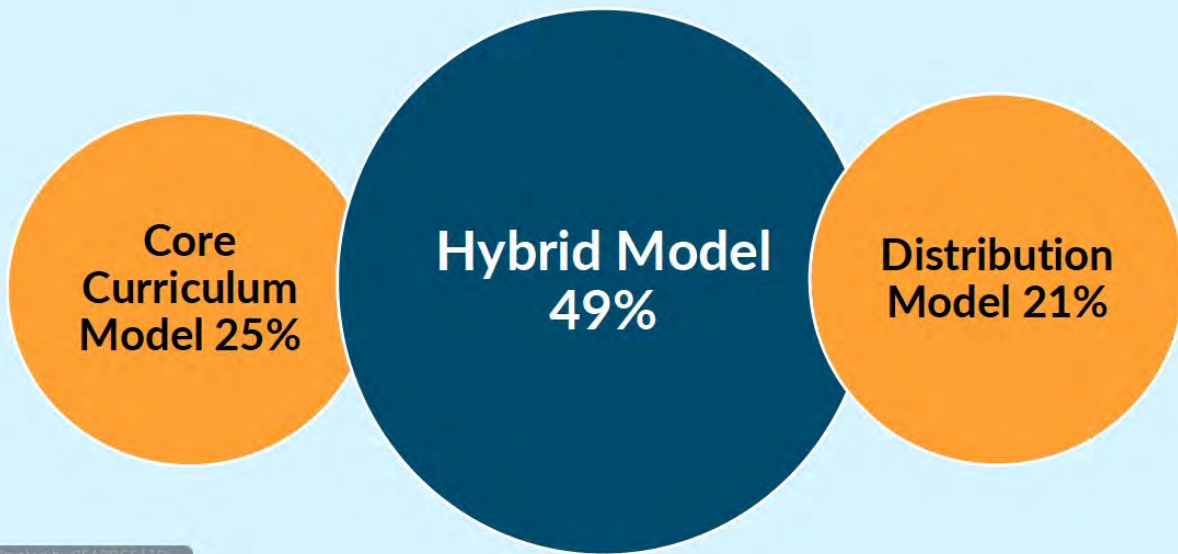
What is means to educate “liberated human beings—people who are independent and flexible in their thinking and capable of responding to the demands of a changing world in ways that are deliberate and civic-minded.”

Hanstedt P. (2012)

Trends in General Education



Prevalence of General Education Models



General Education Model by Institution Type

Over half (**52%**) of stakeholders at four-year private institutions utilize a hybrid model for their general education curricula...



...while significantly fewer (**43%**) four-year public institutions do so.

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Current Status of Gen Ed at Pitt

- General Learning Outcomes are becoming outdated
 - Lacking equity, inclusion, social justice
 - Outdated data literacy and critical evaluation of information
 - Weak connection to ethics
- Little to no connection between Gen Ed (GERs) and Learning Outcomes
- All six first-year admitting schools & campuses espouse their own GERs (and upper-division schools include them via prerequisites)

Challenges with Current Status

- Vulnerable in future accreditation evaluation
- Hampered in developing transfer/articulation partnerships
 - Transfer rates have decreased nearly every year for a decade
 - We are being out-competed in facilitating pipelines
- Complex inter-unit (school/campus/institution) collaboration
- Extended time-to-degree
 - Over past 4 years 150 students:
 - Took > 6 years to graduate (many with far more than 120 credits) or
 - Have amassed 120 credit and *not graduated yet!*
 - Artificially deflates graduation rates
 - Increases debt load

Task Force Objectives

- Prepare engaged and informed graduates for the challenges of the 21st century without increased financial burden or time to degree;
- Evaluate and unify our curricular offerings so that we can optimize access, equity, and success for all undergraduates.





GROUP IDEATION & INITIAL FEEDBACK

- **Motivations / Opportunities**
- **Challenges / Concerns**
- **Conversation & Feedback**


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What motivates or excites you about the work ahead?

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Motivations for Gen Ed Reform



Explore	Curricular Innovation Across Pitt's Schools and Campuses
Pursue	Academic Equity & Inclusive Excellence
Support	Student Success
Increase	Transparency and Understanding
Improve	Accreditation Compliance

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What do you feel might be most challenging about meeting our objectives?

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Challenges for Gen Ed Reform



Invest	Time, Energy, and Resources
Collect	Qualitative and Quantitative Data Across Units
Impact	Faculty, Course Loads, Classroom Mgmt, Enrollment
Meet	Objectives and Timeline
Adapt	Culture, Leadership Transitions, Strategic Plan

Discussion at Tables

1. What do students need to know to be successful in the 21st century?
2. What should students be able to do after they have completed our general education program?
3. Are we persuasively assessing and documenting what students accomplish through general education?
4. How should we encourage and incentivize faculty across schools and campuses to actively participate in genuinely transforming our general education?



Tasks and Timeline

- **Guiding Principles**
- **Working Group Objectives**
- **Timeline**
- **Next Steps: Phase 1**

Task Force Guiding Principles



FOCUS ON SHARED
GENERAL EDUCATION
LEARNING
OUTCOMES



SIMPLIFY
REQUIREMENTS TO
ENCOURAGE
FLEXIBILITY AND
EXPLORATION



PROMOTE STUDENT
AGENCY, ACCESS, AND
AFFORDABILITY



INCENTIVIZE FACULTY
INVOLVEMENT IN AND
COMMITMENT TO
GENERAL EDUCATION

Task Force Guiding Principles



BE RESOURCE
SENSITIVE

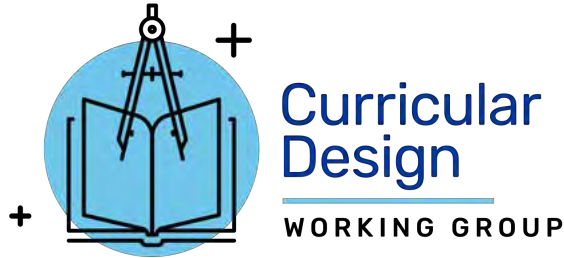


SUPPORT THE
UNIVERSITY'S
MISSION, CORE
VALUES, VISION,
AND STRATEGIC
DIRECTION



MEET
ACCREDITATION
REQUIREMENTS
FOR GENERAL
EDUCATION

Working Groups



- Review general learning outcomes & curricula
- Propose modernized student learning outcomes
- Design standardized Gen Ed curriculum

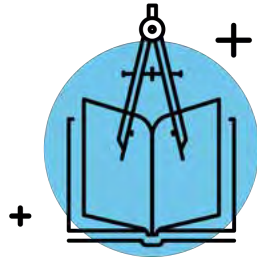


- Provide existing data to inform design, admin, assessment
- Forecast pros/cons of proposed changes
- Propose solutions/updates to processes and procedures



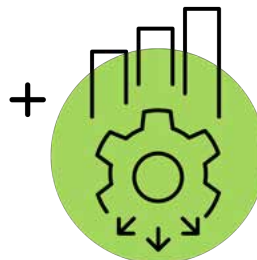
- Review existing structures
- Anticipate policy, staffing, oversight, assessment needs
- Propose solutions/updates to support revisions

Working Groups—Process Guidelines



Curricular
Design

WORKING GROUP



Operation and
Implementation

WORKING GROUP

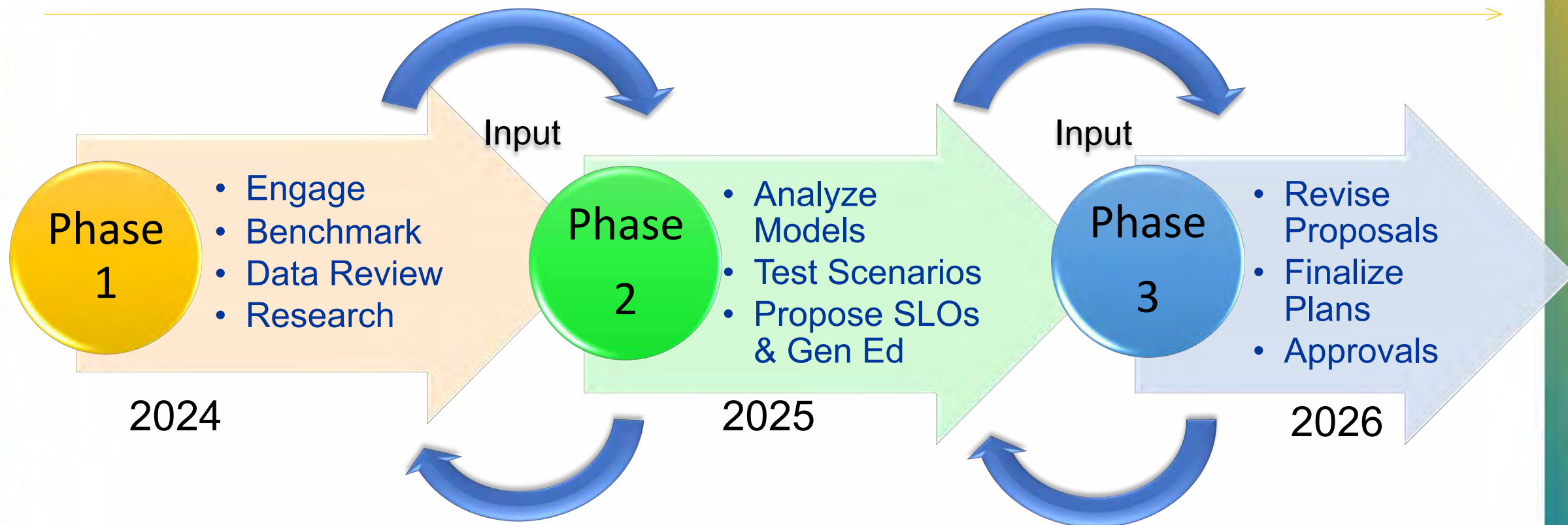


Administration
and Assessment

WORKING GROUP

- Focus on student learning;
- Encourage open communication and transparency;
- Engage a variety of audiences;
- Discuss vision and learning outcomes prior to curricular design;
- Support proposals/models with research;
- Adhere to expected project timeline;
- Seek continuous feedback from our experts, leadership, and approving bodies.

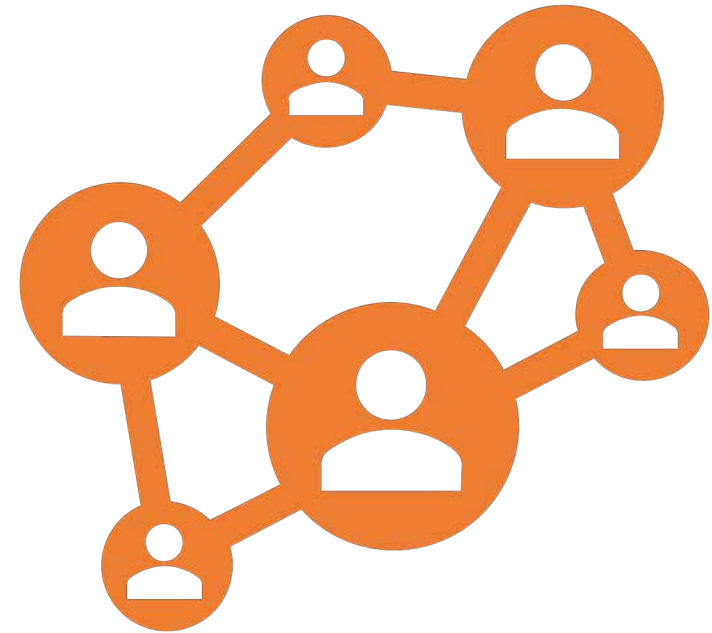
Timeline

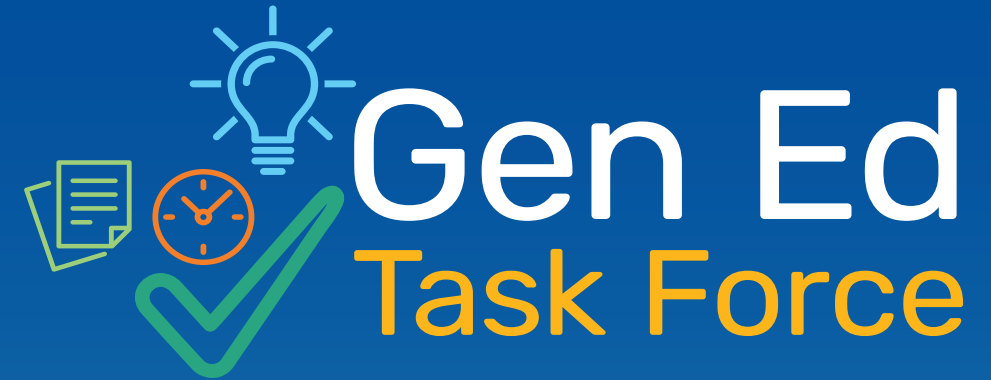


Pitt Gen Ed

Stay Connected and Engaged

- Microsoft Teams
- Email
- Meeting Poll
- Engagement and Listening Sessions





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[provost.pitt.edu/
general-education-task-force](https://provost.pitt.edu/general-education-task-force)



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