

## **Learning from Others: Queens Learning Communities**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. What is a Learning Community?**

A learning community involves courses that are deliberately linked to each other that explore a common theme or idea. This structure allows students and faculty to work with one another to develop insight into the relationships between multiple disciplines and perspectives. These courses may involve shared readings presented from different perspectives or just shared ideas that are deliberately and conscientiously connected between the different classes that are involved.

#### **2. Will students participate in only one learning community while at Queens?**

In this Gen Ed program, students will have the opportunity to participate in three separate learning communities over the course of their career. Learning communities will become progressively challenging and culminate in a final, integrative project in the Junior or Senior year. A student may take learning communities of similar or of very different topics from year-to-year, but the two classes that are taken in a single semester must be thematically linked to each other.

#### **3. Where is foreign language?**

Foreign language remains a degree requirement on the same terms as in the past. Students are still required to demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language at the 102 level before graduation. Moving foreign language from general education to a degree requirement does not alter the number of credit hours required to graduate. So, doing so does not place an additional burden on the student.

The faculty in World Languages is encouraged to submit proposals to join learning communities. Courses could be offered that would meet the 101 or 102 level proficiency that also have a specific thematic connection to a learning community. Additional higher-level language courses could also be offered. In this way, students who have tested out of language, but who would like to continue studying even if they do not major in the language, could take a course from the department. This could also function as a recruiting tool for both majors and minors by offering to promising students who tested out of introductory language classes an opportunity to study with faculty from the World Languages department.

**4. What happened to the PE requirement?**

In the new General Education Learning Goals and Outcomes, every student will, under the Habits of Mind goal, discern the multiple dimensions of self (1e). The multiple dimensions include the mind, body and spirit. This broad approach to health and wellness emphasizes not only physical well-being but also emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. As a result, students may take a Health and Wellness seminar that is integrated into one of their learning communities. It is also possible that a student may meet this requirement by taking a single, stand-alone course.

**5. Where will students encounter cultural arts in the new Gen Ed?**

Students have multiple opportunities to study the cultural arts and express themselves creatively. All students are required to take at least one course that is designated QLC A in throughout their General Education coursework. These courses prioritize creative thinking and expression as defined by the particular learning outcomes represented in this designation. Faculty from the Fine and Cultural Arts fields are specifically invited to propose courses for the learning communities within this framework.

**6. If CORE and the Freshman Writing Program no longer exist in their current form, how will the new Gen Ed impact adjunct and other contract faculty?**

The number of students and the number of courses needed to run the general education program in the new model will not change. The staffing demands are likely to remain the same. For example, during the first semester, we will have to offer forty sections of Roadmap Seminars and English 110. This is the same number of sections as we currently offer for CORE 112 and ENGL 110 during the first semester. During the second semester, we will need to accommodate equal numbers of QLC W seminars, as well as enough sections of QLC 100 seminars.

All faculty, tenure-track, tenured, and adjunct will be invited to submit proposals for these courses and while we would certainly prefer for tenure-track and tenured faculty to teach in this program, we recognize the valuable contributions adjunct and contract faculty make to this institution. We will not be able to staff this program entirely without the help of adjunct faculty.

**7. How will the new program, which eliminates traditional distribution requirements in Math, Science and the Cultural Arts, impact the departments that offered those courses?**

*For Math and Science:* In the new Gen Ed model, all students will be required to take at least one quantitative-based course from within their learning communities (QLC C courses). Both of these courses must challenge students to demonstrate their quantitative literacy and apply that learning to real-world situations or issues. Whereas in the past students had to take one quantitative course, under the new model they will have to take two. These courses may be taught by any faculty with a quantitative specialty – math, physical and natural science, business, and behavioral and social science, but those departments who are interested in recruiting majors and minors are strongly encouraged to design and propose courses. Note, as well, that faculty from the quantitative disciplines may propose courses that use quantitative methods in any of the courses as long as the proposals emphasize and focus on the learning goals and outcomes for general education.

*For Cultural Arts:* In this model, faculty from all disciplines and programs are invited to propose courses for any of the learning community classes, but Fine Arts faculty are particularly invited to propose courses for the QLC A courses.

**8. Where and how do students engage in ethical thinking (4c)?**

There are multiple ways in which ethical thinking may be approached in this curriculum. At the broadest sense, we would welcome proposals for QLC's that focus on the development or the application of ethics in multiple situations. Students may then be able to apply ethical reasoning across more than one course. Additionally, we ask the QLC 300 CE (Community Engagement) course to address that point more specifically. Since that class is designed with a service-learning or civic engagement component, it would necessary for instructors to be conscientious about addressing the reasoning for those kinds of experiences.

**9. Can a department or program use or cross-list an existing course for one of the components of the new Gen Ed program?**

Faculty and departments are also strongly encouraged to think about ways in which courses their faculty teach for general education might also count for the major. Some courses from within the pre-major may also be used in conjunction with a learning community in places where there is a good fit and an opportunity for students to make connections. Those cases would need to be addressed by departments, proactively, rather than on a case-by-case basis with individual students. Note that upper division majors-level courses are not appropriate substitutions for a General Education course.

## **10. How would transfer students enter the new model?**

Transfer students would have their transcripts articulated based on the learning outcomes associated with each course and QLC. At the minimum, transfer students would need to complete a version of the Roadmap seminar, either in person or online, as well as the QLC 300 level and the QCE. This version of the Roadmap seminar would give transfer students the needed guidance and practice with integration and reflection that other students have experienced so that they may successfully complete the QCE project.

Hayworth students would complete the entire model. Additional offerings during the summer would increase the ability of Hayworth students to meet the demands of the QLC's.