

**An Annotated Collection of 25SP Recommendations in response to the  
GE Restructuring Document 2.13.25 and its Addendum 3.5.25  
as of 9.1.25**

The GE Task Force is grateful to the work of the University Planning Council, the Senate's GE Committee, the Office of Assessment & Accreditation, the University Curriculum Committee, and the University Senate for their 25SP participation in the process outline in the UCC Manual (2017).

The *Proposal to Revise GE at Kean: Summer 2025* addresses their recommendations listed below. See the *Proposal's* corresponding page numbers, as indicated.

**University Planning Council Recommendations**

This memorandum summarizes feedback and recommendations from the University Planning Council (UPC) regarding your presentation on the proposed restructuring of Kean University's General Education Program. The UPC unanimously endorsed the proposal while offering the following recommendations for improvement as the proposal advances to subsequent review stages.

**Program Structure and Design**

- **Visual Representation:** The graphic on page 9 requires revision to clearly illustrate the semester 1 structure. The current visualization suggests 16-17 GE credits plus additional courses in the first year, which may create confusion about credit load expectations. (See *Proposal*, p.11)
- **Credit Increase Management:** The proposal increases GE credits from 32 to 37-40 credits. A detailed explanation is needed for how this will be implemented across programs, particularly for:
  - Professional programs with existing accreditation requirements
  - Programs with strict credit limitations
  - Impact on time-to-completion for all majors (See *Proposal*, p.10)
- **Learning Communities Structure:** The criteria for organizing students into learning communities should be further developed, with consideration for connecting themes specifically to students' intended/declared majors or colleges. Student and advisor feedback indicates a disconnect between themes and academic interests of specific majors. (See *Proposal*, p.10)

**Implementation Planning**

- **Student Travel Framework:** The proposal references significant off-campus experiential learning but lacks a detailed administrative framework. Please clarify that:
  - Field trips and off-campus learning experiences will be incorporated into the Implementation Team's responsibilities (See *Proposal*, p.32)
  - Logistical and administrative processes will be established to support faculty coordination of these activities (See *Proposal*, p.28)
  - Budgetary implications have been considered and planned for (See *Proposal*, p.29)
- **Curriculum Transition:** The proposal does not map current GE Distribution courses to new GE Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). (See *Proposal*, p.21). Please provide:
  - A transition plan for existing courses (See *Proposal*, p.20)
  - Timeline and process for course redesignation (See *Proposal*, p.20)
  - Faculty development schedule to support course modifications (See *Proposal*, p.34, **although an item should be added to the Timeline for Summer 2026: "Professional development for faculty teaching existing courses under the new PLO model."**)

- **Guide Sheet Revision Process:** The increased credit requirements necessitate revision of all program guide sheets and four-year plans. Please outline:
  - Timeline for guide sheet updates **(As other campus-wide initiatives will require revision of all programmatic curriculum sheets, no timeline is provided. Instead, the GE revision is expected to be blended into these processes so that needed revisions happen only once. This timing is dependent upon when/if the GE proposal is adopted.)**
  - Process for integrating changes into Navigate and Student Planning platforms **(As other campus-wide initiatives will require revision of all curricular information on Navigate and Student Planning platforms, no process is described. Instead, the GE revision is expected to be blended into the processes so that needed revisions happen only once. This timing is dependent upon when/if the GE proposal is adopted.)**
  - Strategy for communicating changes to current and prospective students **(This is included on p.34's timeline, and the strategies will be developed by the GE Implementation Committee.)**

#### Assessment Framework

- **Learning Outcome Alignment:** Ensure clear alignment between existing GE Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and newly proposed GE PLOs. This mapping should be made explicit in the proposal. **(See *Proposal*, p.11)**
- **Assessment Tools:** All PLO assessment rubrics should be created prior to program rollout. While rubrics have been provided, a Wellness rubric may still be needed. **(The AAC&U VALUE rubrics mentioned on pages 15 – 18 can be found here: <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>)**
- **Course Designation Process:** A structured approach for identifying which courses will be designated as General Education and how those courses will be assessed should be detailed in the proposal. Completion of OAA's Program Assessment System (PAS) is recommended to assist this process. **(See *Proposal* p.19. Note that creation of a full PAS is premature until the proposal is adopted by the Board of Trustees.)**
- **Assessment Technology Integration:** The proposal should specify how Canvas will be utilized to collect GE assessment data and how this will support the culture of assessment in General Education. **(The GE Task Force recognizes the value of using Canvas to collect GE assessment data when appropriate, however the creation of a specific Assessment Plan is premature until the proposal is adopted by the Board of Trustees.)**

#### Document Revisions

- **Terminology Consistency:**
  - References to "equity gaps" should be rephrased as "performance gaps" **(done throughout the *Proposal*)**
  - "Moon Shot for Equity" should be revised to "Moon Shot for Kean" **(done throughout the *Proposal*)**
- **Institutional Alignment:** The document references alignment with the university's mission and core values. Please confirm alignment after possible language revisions to these institutional statements. **(See *Proposal* p.3, with revisions expected when the new Strategic Plan is adopted.)**

## University Senate's GE Committee Recommendations

The General Education Committee initially reviewed the document “Considerations for Restructuring the GE Program at Kean” at its meeting on Thursday, February 20. Professor Rachel Evans addressed the Committee and introduced the document, outlining the history of the GE Task Force at Kean and the pilot programs using learning communities and paired courses that contributed to the GE framework that the document proposes.

Members of the Committee were invited to ask questions during the meeting, set up additional meetings for discussion of the document as needed, and also return to their constituencies within the University and elicit their feedback on the proposals that the document contains. Committee members raised concerns about how program outcomes would be assessed, potential increases in GE credits and the influence this could have on major programs and accreditation requirements, and potential flexibility for GE course requirements to be spread across 4-year degree programs to allow for adequate development within a student's major field of study.

To date, the Committee has also received specific feedback documents from the Department of History, Hennings College, and the GE lecturers. All are included here.

### **Comments and Clarification Requests from the Department of History**

#### *Overall Comment*

The history department strongly urges that HIST 1062 remain a **required GE course**, housed under Intercultural Understanding (not Critical and Creative Thinking, where it is now listed). **(See *Proposal*, p.21, noting that the *Proposal* does not specify any single courses to be required of all students, as no one discipline “owns” a PLO.)**

#### *Specific Comments*

1. This proposal calls for full-time faculty, small class sizes, and the development of interdisciplinary majors/minors. Along with the push to maintain R2, how is this feasible from an infrastructure and personnel perspective? This would require hiring hundreds of full-time faculty and supporting them so they don't leave. GE Pilot students were taught by 0% adjuncts compared to non-Pilot students who had an 85% chance of having only adjunct instructors in their first semester. How will we reconcile that? **(See *Proposal*, p.35 for evidence of the University's commitment to institution change, growth, and improvement – all with fiscal implications. The GE Task Force has been assured by the administration that the endeavor to revise GE at Kean will be no different.)**
2. The proposal highlights core schedules while simultaneously talking about maintaining equity. If students are grouped into cohorts, and courses will be given at a chosen time for that cohort, then it seems a student's personal schedule will dictate what major they can pursue. **(See *Proposal*, p.27)**
3. There is significant concern about the information on generative AI. Studies actively show it leads to memory loss and declining academic performance. We should not have value-positive language on Generative AI: <https://www.psypost.org/chatgpt-linked-to-declining-academic-performance-and-memory-loss-in-new-study/>. This is especially important right now as we are

seeing LLMs and GenAI models shift from regurgitation to become more politicized, developing skewed perspectives in accordance with the views of their creators. We are almost at a tipping point where AI is antithetical to the pursuit of critical thinking, cultural understanding, and academic knowledge that forms the core of undergraduate education. [\(See Proposal, p.19\)](#)

### *Specific Questions*

1. In year one, will there be courses that every student must take, or will there be a list of courses that they could take (as in the second table/year two)? [\(See Proposal, p.12\)](#)
2. What is the "Second-Year Passion Project"? To quote directly from the doc it is supposed to be a "writing-intensive, major-facing research methods course." Will students be expected to declare their major and then take this course in their major department? Would this be swapped in for a major-level methods course? Is this a GE course or a course in the individual major discipline? [\(See Proposal, p.21\)](#)
3. How does the "passion project" fit into the other GE courses? [\(See Proposal, p.12\)](#)
4. For written communication, without themes or contents, what will they write about? [\(Topics for composition assignments within Written Communication courses will be determined through a blend of best practices in writing-instruction already in place, and through the recommendations of the Senate's Writing Emphasis Committee.\)](#)

### **Comments and Clarification Requests from Hennings College**

1. The "Consideration for Restructuring the GE Program at Kean" document (Feb 2025 version) needs to clearly articulate how the requirements differ between BA and BS degrees – What is the difference in credit number required? [\(See Proposal, p.10\)](#)
2. We need Hennings students to be able to take GE courses throughout their 4 years to balance their heavy science courses. The courses in the major should be spread over 4 years and not be delayed especially since courses build off each other. For example, science majors need at least 50% of their credits per semester starting in the fall semester of their first year to be science and math courses in their major. [\(See Proposal, p.12\)](#)
3. The 2-year cohort model presented in the document shows the new GE program as front loaded (freshman/sophomore years) – How can the GE program work if the GE distributions are over 4 years (as Hennings College would prefer)? Does that need eliminate our Hennings College students from the proposed cohort model? We do not want our seniors in a cohort with first-year students – so will there be regularly scheduled non-joint/paired GE course offerings? [\(See Proposal, p.12\)](#)
4. Please correct the Table on page 9 to allow for GE courses to be taken throughout 4 years. There are multiple degree programs in Hennings College with national accreditations that are discipline-specific, have strict regulations for the academic coursework and which require 4-year plans. For example, many science courses need to be taken one after the other as they serve as each others' prerequisites, hence the courses span 3 to 4 years. Chemistry and some Biology majors, for

example, require the following chemistry courses in order: Chem 1083--> 1084--> 2581 --> 2582 --> BCHM 4115 and this sequence is contingent upon successful completion of the corequisite math courses (MATH 1054 is a co-requisite for CHEM 1083). As you can see, this is a 5-semester/3-year sequence. [\(See Proposal, p.12\)](#)

5. Are ID course prefixes being changed to reflect their departments or are the ID courses remaining centralized, with scheduling and staffing continuing to be handled by the home department? (For example, ID 1400 is a CPS managed course– does it need to be changed to CPS 1400 as discussed, a few years ago? ID 1400, a GE course, supports AI and ethics, in addition to the introduction and use of a first programming language). [\(Any such initiative is beyond the scope of the GE Task Force’s charge.\)](#)
6. There are several bullet points about why GE needs to be changed. The one that needs documentation/data/evidence is the statement that students who change their majors are the ones being delayed in their graduation. Within Hennings, students often change between options within the same major. Intradepartmental, and even Intra-college changes do not delay students’ graduation. For example, the various biology degree programs and options all take the same science and math coursework the first couple semesters. [\(See Proposal, p.6\)](#)
7. It would be very helpful in the document to note that existing GE courses will stay active and be offered as part of these value/theme “buckets.” In the GE course examples provided, there are many that are not included. [\(See Proposal, p.21\)](#) Please note the following:
  - a. Intercultural Understanding – ES 1010 (World Geography)
  - b. Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning – BIO 1000, BIO 1200, BIO 2402, BIO 1300, ENV 1000, ENV 1100, ES 1000, ES 1100, ES 1200, ES 1300, ES 1400, FSC 1000, ID 1400, SUST 1000, CHEM 1083, CHEM 1084, PHYS 2091, and PHYS 2092
  - c. Ethical Reasoning – BIO 1200, SUST 1000, ID 1400, FSC 1000
  - d. Wellness: BIO 1000, BIO 1200, BIO 1300, BIO 2402
  - e. Critical and creative thinking: BIO1000, BIO 1200, BIO 1300, BIO 2402, ENV 1000, ENV 1100, SUST 1000
8. We request that the “passion project” for science majors is focused on offering scientific research experiences (RFI, independent research, small group research CURE courses) but acknowledge that the physical lab space and limited faculty number are issues. Perhaps offering students another option would be possible? [\(See Proposal, p.22\)](#)

### **Comments and Clarification Requests from GE Lecturers**

GE lecturers requested clarification on the following points concerning the “Integrative Learning Passion Project”:

1. How will this **new model/course ensure that students gain foundational research skills such as methodology selection, data analysis, academic writing, and ethical considerations?** (See *Proposal*, p.21 - 22)
2. Will this course emphasize discipline-specific research methods, or **will it maintain a broader interdisciplinary approach?** (See *Proposal*, p.21 - 22)
3. Research Methods courses traditionally provide students with the foundation to design and conduct research. **How will the Passion Project course adequately prepare students for upper-division research, capstone projects, or graduate-level study?** (See *Proposal*, p.21 - 22)
4. Will students have the opportunity to conduct independent or faculty-mentored research, or will projects primarily be literature-based? (See *Proposal*, p.21 - 22)
5. Will **faculty receive training or support in implementing this integrative learning approach**, especially if they traditionally teach research methods with a different structure? (See *Proposal*, p.34)
6. Will **class sizes be adjusted to accommodate the intensive mentoring and feedback required** for a writing-heavy, research-focused course? (See *Proposal*, p.22)
7. Research Methods courses are traditionally designed to ensure all students, regardless of major, receive equitable research training. **How will this Passion Project model ensure that all students receive comparable rigor and exposure to research skills across disciplines?** (See *Proposal*, p.22)
8. How will the **university assess the effectiveness of the Passion Project model in comparison to the traditional Research Methods course?** (The Passion Project course, like all elements of the GE curriculum, will be part of the GE Program's P.A.S. to be developed once the proposal is adopted by the Board of Trustees.)

### **Office of Accreditation & Assessment Recommendations**

The Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) reviewed the document "Considerations for Restructuring the GE Program at Kean" in preparation for the meeting on Thursday, March 6th, with members of the GE Task Force. Additionally, the GE Task Force provided feedback from the University Planning Council (UPC) along with an addendum.

Below is a list of meeting attendees:

Office of Accreditation and Assessment	GE Task Force
Neva Lozada, AVP Administration	Jessica Thurlow, Dean of CLA
Susan Ahern, Director, OAA	Rachel Evans, Associate Professor, Theatre

This document provides a summary of feedback and recommendations from the OAA on the proposed restructuring of Kean University's General Education Program. While the OAA supports the proposal, we offer the following recommendations for improvement as it progresses through subsequent review stages.

#### Program Assessment System (PAS):

- The OAA believes that shifting to a Program Learning Outcome model will strengthen the culture of assessment in the General Education Program and its associated processes.
- The OAA has developed the Program Assessment System (PAS) to enhance assessment processes across the University through a centralized, proactive approach. The PAS establishes a systematic framework that provides programs, departments, and colleges with a standardized template for area-specific assessment programs.
- Key components of PAS include academic goals, student- and program-level outcomes, curriculum and assessment mapping, assessment paradigms, data types, assessment methods, operational assessment templates, data collection and analysis, use of data, and program assessment examples.

#### Program Learning Outcomes and Rubrics:

- As the GE Task Force begins to develop the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and corresponding Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) the OAA would welcome the opportunity to provide additional resources to the GE Task Force to ensure best practices in learning outcome assessment.
- At this stage, the GE Task Force has identified nine AAC&U rubrics to be adopted for alignment with Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and General Education course offerings. The adoption process will be led by the faculty teaching these courses, with faculty grouped by PLO. The OAA offers to support this process by assisting faculty as needed.

#### Assessment Measures:

- To ensure there is a comprehensive assessment of the GE Program and its designated courses, a list of Direct and Indirect Methods should be listed. See example below: **(Identifying direct and indirect measures for assessment of the revised GE program is premature until the proposal has been adopted by the Board of Trustees.)**

#### Assessment Framework

- Course Designation Process: The OAA recommends a structured approach for identifying which courses will be designated as General Education and outlining how those courses will be assessed. This process should be clearly detailed in the proposal. Additionally, the OAA supports the GE Task Force's decision to revise GE courses to align with the newly established PLOs and SLOs. **(See Proposal, p.20)**
- Assessment Technology Integration: The proposal should outline how the Canvas Learning Management System will be used to collect General Education assessment data and how this integration



will support a culture of assessment within the GE program. Additionally, all assessment plans and reports will be required to be uploaded through the Watermark Assessment Management System. **(The revised GE Program will comply with assessment expectations and adopt available technologies to support a culture of assessment within GE.)**

Impact of GE Credit Increase on Specialized Accreditation Requirements:

- The proposed increase in General Education credits from 32 to 37-40 requires a detailed explanation of its implementation across programs, particularly in relation to accreditation requirements. Professional programs with existing accreditation standards must ensure compliance while integrating the additional credits, and programs with strict credit limitations will need a clear plan to accommodate the changes. Additionally, the impact on time-to-completion for all majors must be carefully assessed to maintain alignment with accreditation expectations and student progression. **(See Proposal, p.10)**
- The OAA will provide an updated list of Kean's accredited programs along with their respective standards regarding the required number of major credits.

GE Administration and Faculty Administrative Release Positions:

- The roles of program and assessment coordinators must be clearly defined, including the allocation of release time and compensation. Additionally, considerations should be made for coordinators from programs outside the GE Program who currently receive compensation solely for their own academic program's assessment responsibilities. **(See Proposal, p.20)**

### **University Curriculum Committee Recommendations**

The University Curriculum Committee met on March 20, 2025 to discuss and review the documents "Considerations for Restructuring the GE Program at Kean," as well as the addendum, and comments provided by UPC, OAA, and the University GE Committee. Dr Rachel Evans, and Dr Bridie Chapman were both in attendance. They presented the work so far and explained the curriculum process thus far.

#### **Overall Comments:**

1. As the administration in DC has changed, some of the language used in the document should be revised. While Kean's mission remains, the importance of GE remains, the language used should reflect the changes explained by President Repollet at the Town Hall. **(See Proposal, p.3, with revisions expected when the new Strategic Plan is adopted.)**
2. Another issue in this document is the expressed hope for a greater number of international students. Again, with a change in administration in DC, the committee noted that the increase hoped for here may not happen, and wonders what impact this has on the plans. **(The GE program, like all campus units, will be responsive as needs develop and Kean's approach becomes clearer.)**



3. While this document explains the plans for GE on the Union campus, the committee asked what impact, if any the merger with NJCU has on planning? **(No additional information about the merger of NJCU's curriculum into Kean's is available at this time. The GE Program is poised to adapt, as needed.)**
4. The committee noted the same comment that was noted elsewhere – while the document states that students when they change major have been hindered by different GE standards across the curriculum – there is no data here. Which programs and how many students are involved here? **(See Proposal, p.6)**
5. There was a request made for additional descriptions for the learning outcomes. **(See Proposal, p.15)**
6. There was a request made for more data and descriptions from the pilot study. **(See Proposal, p.8 and p.61)**
7. The ask that more full-time faculty teach in the program is welcomed. But then the question must be asked about faculty being available to teach upper-level classes. A thoughtful inter-change of full-time faculty is vital here. **(See Proposal, p.5)**
8. Centralized scheduling is not explained here and has the potential to disrupt faculty, and the demands for research. It is the hope of the committee that whatever system is used will include respect for faculty time, research, and service. **(See Proposal, p.27)**
9. There is a suggestion here that there are changes made to who can serve on the GE committee. This seems to be an issue for the Senate and its committee. **(The GE Task Force merely makes a recommendation, noting such matters are the purview of the Senate.)**
10. The creation of an Implementation Committee is the next step, but noticeably this is now chaired by two persons from admin. This seems to be a major change from a group which had faculty at its core and its leadership. The committee wonders why this is. **(See Proposal, p.31)**
11. The Committee also asks which programs will be implementing the new GE curriculum over the course of the 4-year degree. This is of concern to the Michael Graves College where students must begin their major classes immediately. The same issue exists for Science students who again must begin a system of classes for their major. **(See Proposal, p.12)**
12. There were questions and concerns about the “passion project” and its meaning. A clearer explanation of this project: what it is and can be is needed. Can this be used by Areas for example in the Additional Required Courses or by Education as Clinical I? Can it be connected to the final project asked for in GE (Senior Seminar)? And this in turn led to the ask of if Department courses can be aligned with PLOs so they can be aligned with GE? **(See Proposal, p.21)**
13. A suggestion was made that a sample possible guidesheet would be created where areas can see where the various courses would be placed in the new system. This position of the passion project

on the right or left side of the guidesheet was of concern. (See *Proposal*, p.13 - 14)

14. A specific issue raised was what was going to replace GE 20XX (Research and Tech)? (See *Proposal*, p.21)

### **University Senate Recommendations**

The University Senate and its Executive Committee have reviewed and discussed the restructuring proposal dated February 13, 2025, the addendum dated March 5, 2025, and the presentation made on April 22, 2025. The proposal was also discussed in an open session on May 6, 2025, and subsequently in a closed session. The Senate acknowledges the work of the Task Force. It supports revisions to the General Education curriculum to help students develop skills and competencies that enhance the value of their education. The General Education Task Force indicates that incorporating HIP should have a positive effect on retention, while providing students with pathways to success in their majors and beyond.

The Senate appreciates the efforts of the GE Task Force in restructuring General Education (GE). However, the Senate has several questions that need to be addressed before open hearings can be scheduled. We look forward to receiving a revised document that addresses the issues identified by the University Planning Council, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation, the Senate's General Education Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, and the Senate's concerns outlined below, to hold meaningful open hearings where questions from the university community can be answered.

#### **A. Considerations for Restructuring or Restructuring Document**

The document's title is "*Considerations for Restructuring*." However, on page 22, the implementation team's task includes "reviewing the Fall 2025 Considerations Document and **forthcoming Restructuring Document**," implying that what is presented is not a restructuring document. The title of the document confirms that it is merely a document outlining various considerations for restructuring General Education (GE). The task force should clarify whether the document shared with the Senate is a "Considerations Document" or a "Restructuring Document." The timeline implies that it is the latter. If so, several essential details are missing from the document.

The UCC Manual calls for the Senate to act on a comprehensive restructuring document that **analyzes the need for change, describes the proposed program and its academic, fiscal, and administrative implications**, and hold open hearings for the university community. However, the Senate is unable to hold open hearings with the limited information presented and the numerous unresolved questions and issues in the consideration document.

Critical details missing from the document include **SLOs and PLOs** (the provided hyperlink does not work) (See *Proposal*, p.11 and 15), detailed cost analyses and fiscal implications, guidance on how courses receive GE designation (See *Proposal*, p.19), and administrative issues, including long-term plans to staff with full-time faculty. (Note that a detailed cost analysis is beyond the purview of the GE Task Force's charge, having been informed by the administration that there is support for the *Proposal* and its fiscal implications. Adoption by the Board of Trustees will further signal to the campus community that Kean is committed to the *Proposal* and its implementation.)

Without these details, evaluating and providing meaningful recommendations, as envisioned in the UCC Manual, is challenging.

**B. Details Needed in Restructuring Document**

**i. Fiscal Implications:**

During the budget presentation to the Senate on April 22, 2025, Mr. Brannen indicated a \$7.5 million shortfall in state aid for the coming year. The Senate would like to know how this impacts funding of the restructuring effort.

The direct costs associated with the GE pilot program, which consisted of 120 students in Fall 2024, required 100 TCH, equating to about \$500,000. Additional expenses were incurred in the Spring of 2025 and are anticipated in the Summer and Fall of 2025, although no specific details are provided. Similarly, costs associated with General Education Mentor (GEM) peer-to-peer support and embedded tutoring must be accounted for.

Another example of additional costs and faculty needs is that SOC 1000 and ECON 1020 typically have course capacities of 35. However, the sections scheduled as part of the learning community are limited to 20 students, requiring additional departmental resources, including additional adjuncts. All these extra costs need to be quantified, stated, and commitment secured.

It would be helpful to know the GE Task Force's expectations regarding cost projections for scaling the program to the undergraduate population. Is the university willing and able to make such a commitment? The Senate would also like to understand how additional financial and non-financial resources directed to DGEIS impact funding of other departments and programs in times of declining state support.

**(Note that a detailed cost analysis is beyond the purview of the GE Task Force's charge, having been informed by the administration that there is support for the *Proposal* and its fiscal implications. Adoption by the Board of Trustees will further signal to the campus community that Kean is committed to the *Proposal* and its implementation.)**

**ii. Administrative Implications:**

Page 4 of the considerations document states that the General Education (GE) curriculum will require a range of administrative changes and will depend on the collaborative efforts of Deans, faculty, and staff from the Colleges, as well as partners across the University, to be successful. These anticipated changes require further elaboration, particularly regarding the staffing of courses.

**i. Full-time faculty and GE Courses**

Broad, unrealistic statements, such as a significant reduction in adjunct faculty teaching general education (GE) classes, are made as part of the General Education (GE) restructuring. Are there plans and approvals to hire full-time faculty or, as the document suggests, to ask faculty from other departments to teach General Education (GE) courses? If so, will even a larger number of major classes be relegated to adjunct teaching? Most departments are already stretched thin, and it is too much of an ask to expect them to loan faculty to DGEIS without impacting their discipline-based teaching and work. **(Once the *Proposal* is adopted by the Board of Trustees, the Deans will need to work with Academic Affairs, DGEIS, and the departments to address such concerns.)**

The Senate's endorsement of the restructuring without knowing the administration's commitment to hiring more full-time faculty to teach General Education courses is ill-advised. A revised restructuring document should provide details on the administration's plan for addressing the staffing issues. **(The GE pilots in 24SP, 24FA, and 25FA demonstrate the commitment of the administration to the implications in the Proposal.)**

ii. **DGEIS Structure** (See *Proposal*, p.25)

The proposed program's administration does not appear conducive to effective implementation, as DGEIS is an unusual organizational structure housed within the Provost's Office. The current DGEIS administrative structure blurs the lines between roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships. Operating outside the standard Departmental/Chair structure, DGEIS depends on academic support from outside its division through a range of cross-campus Faculty Administrative Release positions (TCH allocations), GE Coordinators, Assessment Coordinators, Course Coordinators, and faculty teaching General Education classes. However, none of these faculty members report to DGEIS.

The current structure appears to doom DGEIS to a perpetual life of "workarounds" because it is a division rather than a fully functioning Department or College Academic Unit and relies on academic units that do not report to it. This structure may hinder the successful implementation of the proposed General Education (GE) program.

The proposal entails excessive centralization and control of 30% of the undergraduate degree program by DGEIS with no full-time, tenure-track faculty. Departments have concerns that several courses belonging to their departments have been scheduled by DGEIS. The departments are now expected to staff them with full-time faculty without consideration for faculty commitments and plans for other classes.

Page 19 calls for the Senate GE Committee members to teach at least one GE course per semester. It should be noted that the University Senate, not the GE Task Force, is responsible for determining the structure and composition of the GE Senate Committee; any procedural directives issued by the GE Task Force are unproductive. **(The GE Task Force merely makes a recommendation, noting such matters are the purview of the Senate.)**

iii. **Academic Implications:**

A large number of students arriving at Kean have significant academic deficiencies. Strengthening and revising the foundation-level classes, now rebranded as the Essential Learning Courses, is crucial for students' success in subsequent courses.

- a. **Foundational Skills:** (See *Proposal*, p.11 for 16-17cr. in Essential Learning courses) The proposal does not address remedying these deficiencies. The foundational skills identified on page 12 —civic engagement, ethical reasoning, and cultural competency — are secondary. Foundation skills essential for our students to succeed include improvements in written and oral communication, quantitative problem-solving, and the ability to evaluate and synthesize information. Were there improvements in these areas in the pilot program? The proposal also lacks sufficient detail regarding writing-intensive courses and how writing will be scaffolded vertically. Were writing assignments required in the pilot, and what was the outcome?

The proposed program, as outlined, is overly focused on the humanities while increasing the number of credits required for the BS degree ([See Proposal, p.10](#)) Middle States requires students to acquire and demonstrate essential skills, including **oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy**. How does the proposed GE restructuring address these weaknesses of incoming students? ([The GE Task Force recognizes the work that the current GE Program has done to address remediation needed by Kean's incoming students; such best practices are expected to continue with the support of NTLC and other campus units. Additionally, the inclusion of HIPs is likely to produce additional positive outcomes. Such initiatives will be assessed by the GE Program's PAS, once created.](#))

b. Digital Competency/Intelligence:

The proposal does not discuss digital competency or intelligence, a critical skill that is often overlooked. For example, business students would benefit from a required Microsoft Certification, especially in areas such as Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Project, and other software proficiency areas. For example, the April 22 NACE Career Competencies workshop at Kean emphasized the importance of addressing digital competency and intelligence. ([The GE Task Force encourages the creation of new GE courses to address digital competency under the Essential Learning PLO of Quantitative & Scientific Reasoning.](#))

c. Generative AI: ([see Proposal, p.19](#))

The GE Task Force should also examine GenAI. An insightful comment received was that students should have an introduction to general AI and machine learning in a general education (GE) foundations class, along with an exploration of the ethics of general AI (the computer science department is participating in a large NSF grant to embed AI ethics into their curriculum). The task force is advised to explore the creation of a single technology course, such as "Understanding Technology" or a similar course, that meets the needs of an educated workforce. In any case, technological competence should be a Program Learning Outcome (PLO) in the revised General Education (GE) curriculum. ([The GE Task Force encourages the creation of new GE courses to address technology under the Essential Learning PLO of Quantitative & Scientific Reasoning.](#))

The individual disciplines can later provide more specific use cases for their students, aligning with their career paths, as the use of AI for students in Fine Arts, Science, and Business may differ significantly.

d. Discipline Omissions and Course Alignments:

Given the current state of affairs, is sidelining history as a subject a good idea? The omission of a historical category (limited to one course in history), given the significance of history to the underpinnings of a liberal arts education, is striking. The categories into which different disciplines/courses have been grouped appear superficial in the absence of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). For example, on page 4 of the addendum, Art History appears under the intercultural understanding, and History appears under critical and creative thinking, which seems arbitrary. The same applies to CPS 1032, which is assigned to ethical reasoning and ID 1300 - Women's and

Gender Studies, listed under Wellness, but is probably more appropriate for critical thinking. (see [Proposal, p.21](#))

There is no discussion of World Language courses in the document. Given the demand for second language proficiency and increased emphasis on providing Travel Learn opportunities to our students, it would be beneficial for students to study a language at the 1000/2000 levels. **(Existing courses in world languages will be able to transition from Distribution courses to the new PLO model like all other current Distribution courses. See [Proposal, p.20](#))**

e. Passion Project:

An elaboration on the proposed 'Passion Project' beyond its mention would be helpful. How is the research course different than the current GE 202X? (see [Proposal, p.21](#))

f. Increased Credit Requirements for BS degree: (see [Proposal, p.10](#))

Justification for the increase in the number of credits attributed to General Education (GE) is needed. Is it critical to increase PLOs to ten? Or would it be more desirable to focus on a smaller number of PLOs and excel at achieving them?

Related to this is also the effort to increase the number of free electives and encourage students to pursue interdisciplinary minors. Although not discussed in this document, many majors are required to reduce the number of major courses, thereby creating additional free electives. The net effect will be 40-50% of the courses in liberal arts. Has the impact of these changes been considered on discipline-specific core competencies of students for their chosen careers?

g. Core Values:

How many of the 10 core value designations can be assigned to a single course? Can major courses seek one or more of the proposed 10 core value designations? Can a course simultaneously satisfy a GE and major requirement? (see [Proposal, p.20](#))

h. Transfer Credits:

The University admits many transfer students from community colleges with whom articulation agreements have been entered. How does the GE restructuring address the one-to-one transfer of GE credits from all community colleges, as per njtransfer.org? (see [Proposal, p.31 for inclusion of Transfer services in the charge of the GE Implementation Committee](#))

iv. Miscellaneous Points:

No evidence supports the statement that students add significant time to degree completion when switching majors due to added general education (GE) requirements, as indicated on page 7. Would like data for this claim. (see [Proposal, p.7](#))

The considerations document notes that *students lacked a clear understanding of the goals or sequencing of courses in their general education (GE) experience*. This presumably refers to the Distribution Courses in the current structure. It is unclear how the proposed core values courses create a sense of purpose among learners. (see [Proposal, p.7](#))



The proposal claims *a clear strategy or structure for scaffolding student learning vertically from the first and second years through the major GE Capstone*. Other than this statement, there is no evidence of how this is achieved. (see *Proposal*, p.7 - 8)

On Ellucian, significant work, including the establishment of course types, is being implemented. It is concerning as this work did not undergo review by the Academic Standards & Policy Committee to create these categories. Shouldn't the GE Committee and the Academic Standards and Policy Committee approve the course types? Some of these are course types, but others are academic areas. That can be confusing to students. **(This matter is beyond the scope of the GE Task Force's charge.)**

It would be helpful to see a list of peer colleges or universities with similar student profiles where General Education (GE) programs, similar to those being proposed at Kean, have been effective. (see *Proposal*, p.39 - 42 and the recording from the May 22, 2024 Zoom webinar found on the GE Task Force website: <https://www.kean.edu/offices/academic-affairs/general-education-curriculum-task-force/shared-presentation-public>)

### C. An Alternative Idea (proposed by the Senate)

The pilot yielded no significant improvement in results. Additionally, the initial reaction to the documents provided by the GE Task Force is that perhaps the Task Force's proposal falls under the procedure for *"Program Revisions Within the Existing General Education Structure"* of the UCC Manual.

The proposed program could be presented as *'Revisions'*, with existing GE courses being asked to identify core values covered in the respective classes and/or revise courses with specific core values in mind. A thematic, interdisciplinary Learning Community formed by pairing two courses is new and can be desirable, as it appears to incorporate more HIP practices in the paired courses. The rest of the program is a repackaging of the existing GE Program. (e.g., Passion Project is GE 2021). The April 22, 2025, presentation illustrates direct equivalencies between current Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and the proposed Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs).

Following the alternative route of *'Program Revisions Within the Existing General Education Structure'* would alleviate the need to revise curriculum sheets and revisit the transfer equivalencies. The Program Revision approval process is less cumbersome and more likely to be assured. **(The GE Task Force was charged with Major Restructuring of the GE Program. See Proposal, p.48)**

### **Summary:**

The General Education (GE) program is intended to provide a framework for lifelong knowledge cultivation, assimilation, and skill development. Our students should be able to rely on the core competencies and skills from their general education program to respond to and adapt to the disruptive forces that create, expand, or contract labor markets.

The work of the task force is challenging and laudable. But much more remains to be done before the idea of implementation can be entertained. GE Restructuring should impose as little burden as possible on students, faculty, and staff, while ensuring that the core competencies are met. A comprehensive, clear, and concise document that addresses all these issues and those already received from the University Planning Council, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation, the Senate's General Education Committee, and the



University Curriculum Committee would then be ready for the Senate to hold open hearings to solicit feedback from the university community.