

# LSU STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

**LEADING LOUISIANA. IMPACTING THE WORLD.**

THE INTEGRATIVE LEARNING CORE:  
A PROPOSAL FROM THE STRATEGIC PLANNING GENERAL EDUCATION  
SUBCOMMITTEE



## Our Values

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Referencing the institution's original charter, LSU's rich tradition supports the ideals we value as a campus community a balanced university that promotes the importance of our agricultural and engineering background, as well as the humanities, arts, and sciences with a passion to educate the whole individual that is inclusive and inquisitive. As faculty, staff, students, and alumni, we strive for excellence in expressing these values so they remain part of our culture and the legacy of LSU. They are:

**CREATIVE  
COLLABORATIVE**

**CULTURALLY ADEPT  
GLOBALLY ENGAGED**

**INNOVATIVE  
TRANSFORMATIVE**

## Background

As part of the University strategic planning effort, a committee of faculty was empaneled to review the LSU general education framework and develop a curricular model that educates students as effective and versatile problem solvers, global citizens, and leaders for a complex world.

Between January and November 2017, the committee convened 19 meetings. The committee began its work by a) reviewing the current general education format as well as Board of Regents and SACS requirements, b) discussing how to shape a general education curriculum based on the academic principles and values of the LSU 2025 Strategic Plan, and c) reviewing best practices as defined by national higher education groups and nationwide efforts at general education reform (which was an ongoing part of the process).

During the process, the committee defined a set of strategies needed to design an integrative core curriculum. These included:

1. Defining proficiencies (What should LSU students learn in the general education curriculum?)
2. Delineating pedagogical methods (What are the best pedagogical approaches that LSU faculty can use?)
3. Integrating proficiencies and pedagogies across areas of inquiry
4. Aligning proficiencies with University values (Anchor the general education curriculum in LSU values.)

The charge and strategies were presented over the course of several 'town hall' meetings to groups of faculty, staff, and students in the spring of 2017. Subsequent to the town hall meetings, a survey was conducted to elicit input on desirable learning competencies. These data were compiled and discussed extensively by the working committee, and a period of intensive study and dialogue took place wherein a core set of learning competencies were distilled. In addition, over the summer, a subset of the committee attended the AAC&U Institute on Integrative Learning and, as an exercise through the workshop, developed a preliminary draft action plan. Committee members also met with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to provide an overview of the impending recommendations during the beginning of the fall 2017 semester. Later in the fall 2017 semester, several more campus-based public forums were held in which the recommendations outlined below were summarized. Finally, the proposed framework was presented along with the first reading of Faculty Senate Resolution 17-07 on November 6, 2017, and questions from Faculty Senate members were answered with no significant objections noted.

## Committee Members

Jason Badeaux/Erica Borne (Student Government)

Kate Bratton (HSS)

George Cochran (SCI)

Mari Fuentes-Martin (DoS, *ex officio*)

Blake Howe (MDA)

Bill Kelso (AGRI)

Matt Lee (OAA, Chair)

Mandi Lopez (VET)

Bobby Matthews (OAE, *ex officio*)

Rick Moreland (HSS)

Dimitris Nikitopoulos (ENGR)

Rick Ortner (A+D)

Carol Wicks (SCI)

Vince Wilson (COAST)

## Recommendations

Based on this process, the committee has distilled two main foundational recommendations, a learning competency framework and several ancillary recommendations. The two foundational recommendations are as follows:

*Recommendation 1:* The committee recommends the adoption of a re-branding effort, moving away from reference to the ‘general education curriculum’ to what will be termed the “LSU Integrative Learning Core”

*Recommendation 2:* The committee also recommends that the keystone of this new general education framework is that the coursework requirements adopt “integrative learning” strategies.

**Definition of Integrative Learning:** Integrative learning is [1] an understanding and [2] a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus. [Definition adapted from the AAC&U Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric]

The fundamental idea of the LSU Integrative Learning Core is that the student develops across the undergraduate curriculum the practical and intellectual capacities associated with Integrative Learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in post-baccalaureate contexts. The student’s exposure to these capacities at increasing levels of complexity is a “visible” thread that runs throughout undergraduate study. As noted in the framing language of the AAC&U Integrative Learning Rubric,

*integrative experiences often occur as learners address real-world problems [that] require multiple areas of knowledge and multiple modes of inquiry, offering multiple solutions and benefiting from multiple perspectives. Integrative learning also involves internal changes in the learner. These internal changes, which indicate growth as a confident, lifelong learner, include the ability to adapt one’s intellectual skills to contribute in a wide variety of situations, and to understand and develop individual purpose, value, and ethics. [Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009). Integrative Learning VALUE rubric. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/integrative-learning>].*

This is to say that the intentional infusion of integrative learning strategies and pedagogies into general education courses sets the stage for the student’s more sophisticated experience of integrative learning in upper-level courses in the major field of study.

*Recommendation 3:* Under the umbrella of the integrative learning framework, the committee recommends the adoption of the following learning competencies, based on both the campus survey and gold standards derived from a variety of sources including LEAP/Value, National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment, and Lumina Foundation Degree Qualifications Profile Guidelines, Standards, and Recommendations. Corresponding definitions are drawn from AAC&U Value Rubrics.

- a. Critical Inquiry and Integrative Applications: A systematic process of exploring issues, objects, or works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. Includes breaking complex topics into issues or parts to gain better understanding of them.
- b. Communication: development and expression of ideas in speaking and writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve many different writing technologies and mixing texts, data, and images. Oral communication is prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, foster understanding, or promote change in the listeners’ attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. Communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

c. Civic and Global Application:

- i. Intercultural Competence: a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.
- ii. Global Engagement: critical analysis of and engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability.
- iii. Civic Responsibility: working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivations to make that difference. Promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political means.
- iv. Ethical Reasoning: the ability to assess ethical values and social contexts of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions.

d. Quantitative and Inferential Reasoning: competency and comfort in working with numerical data or formal logic and drawing inferences based on these.

*Ancillary Recommendation 3a:* The committee also recommends that the Communication requirement no longer be solely limited to English 1001 and English 2000 (or the pertinent honors classes currently approved). Rather, the recommendation is that English 1001 be considered a pre-requisite, that the core communication/composition course be English 2000 (or the pertinent honors classes currently approved), and that students be required to take a CxC Communication Intensive certified course in their major at the 3000- or 4000-level or have a similar intensive communication experience in the context of the disciplinary degree program.

*Ancillary Recommendation 3b:* An additional recommendation pertains to the current LSU General Education policy requiring 9 hours in the Natural Sciences with 6 of the 9 being in sequence. The recommended framework eliminates the sequence requirement, but importantly, still allows for it. Thus, STEM majors will still be able to adhere to college or departmental-level recommended pathways that might require the sequence, while non-STEM majors will be required to take 9 hours in the natural sciences under an integrative learning model but are not required to adhere to a 6 hour sequence (although they may do so if they so desire).

Under these recommendations, there are no fundamental alterations required to meet either Louisiana Board of Regents general education requirements or SACSCOC requirements.

## The Framework in Practice

This framework is more thoroughly explicated below, by way of example. The framework requires 39 hours distributed across 6 broad disciplinary areas (English, Math/Analytical Reasoning, Natural Sciences, Humanities, Fine Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences). These credits can be flexibly distributed across the following learning competencies.

**1. Introduction to Critical Inquiry and Integrative Learning (15 hours)** – *courses would help students explore issues and make connections among ideas and experiences.*

[Note that the required Integrative Learning component of a course in this category operates at the beginning level, i.e., guiding students in the intellectual process of “making connections among ideas and experiences” associated with the discipline of the course and with the general education area in which it resides. Instructors would give some attention to the general manner in which critical inquiry occurs in the discipline and area, particularly in terms of its relation to aspects of integrative learning, i.e., to making connections and synthesizing/transferring learning to different situations.]

STRATEGY: **Guidelines and pedagogies** will be articulated/described and suggested for courses to incorporate an Integrative Learning component, beginning with the general education courses presently listed as offering credit in the appropriate area [i.e. Art credit in Architecture, Art, Art History, Music, and Theater; Natural Sciences in science courses; etc.]. An obvious first step is to identify, in existing general education courses, teaching and learning strategies that fall under the Integrative Learning rubric.

a. Inquiry and Integrative Learning in the **Arts** [3 hrs]

b. Inquiry and Integrative Learning in the **Natural Sciences** [6 hrs]:

*[Note: An additional 3 hrs, either in Life or Physical Sciences included elsewhere, such as in Group 4, Civic and Global Learning, below.]*

*i. Life Sciences [3 hrs]*

*ii. Physical Sciences [3 hrs]*

c. Inquiry and Integrative Learning in the **Humanities** [3-6 hrs] -- [An additional 3-6 hrs in Humanities included in group 4, Civic and Global Learning, below.]

d. Inquiry and Integrative Learning in the **Social Sciences** [3-6 hrs]

**NOTE:** *[Various permutations are possible here. For example, a student may take 3 hours in the humanities and 6 hours of social sciences here, while taking 6 hours of humanities under Civic and Global Application, or a student may take 6 hours of humanities and 3 hours of social science here, and 3 hours of humanities and 3 hours of social sciences under Civic and Global Applications. Other combinations are also possible.]*

2. **Communication [6 hours]** – courses would address writing and speaking as both the articulation of thinking in specific contexts and as integrative learning [making connections and synthesizing & transferring learning] that would inform the student’s undergraduate work going forward.

STRATEGY: **Guidelines and pedagogies** will be articulated/described and suggested for courses to incorporate an Integrative Learning component, beginning with the general education courses presently listed as offering credit in English 2000 or other approved second-level composition courses. An obvious first step is to determine, in existing English Composition courses, teaching and learning strategies that fall under the Integrative Learning rubric.

a. Composition and Integrative Thinking [3 hrs]

b. Advanced Communication and Integrative Thinking [3 hrs] –These courses would be required to be CxC Communication Intensive certified courses for Written and/or Spoken Communication in the major or some similar intensive communication experience in the context of the disciplinary degree program.

3. **Quantitative and Inferential Thinking [6 hours]** – courses would help students [1] be competent and comfortable working with numerical data and [2] understand [build] arguments supported by quantitative evidence using words, tables, graphs, and mathematical equations or formal logic.

STRATEGY: **Guidelines and pedagogies** will be articulated/described and suggested for courses to incorporate an Integrative Learning component, beginning with the general education courses presently listed as offering credit in Analytical Reasoning. An obvious first step is to identify, in existing courses, teaching and learning strategies that fall under the Integrative Learning rubric.

a. Basic Quantitative Reasoning [3 hrs]

b. Inferential Reasoning [3 hrs]

4. **Civic and Global Learning [12 hours]** – courses would help students become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who seek to understand how actions affect communities and the environment.

**NOTE:** [At least one of these must be a humanities course to complete a total of 9 hrs credit in Humanities, and one must be a Physical or Life Science course to complete a total of 9 hrs credit in Natural Sciences.]

STRATEGY: **Guidelines and pedagogies** will be articulated/described and suggested for courses to incorporate an Integrative Learning component. Criteria also will be established to satisfy each of the four aspects of Civic and Global Learning. Obvious early steps are to identify, in existing general education courses, teaching and learning strategies that fall under the Integrative Learning rubric and that satisfy one or more of the set of criteria associated with one of the aspects of Civic and Global Learning. Disciplinary courses ranging from 1000 level to 4000 level may have the potential to incorporate the necessary pedagogies and criteria for one of these four areas to be acceptable for general education credit in that specific area.

a. Global Learning [3 hrs]

b. Intercultural Competence [3 hrs]

c. Civic Engagement [3 hrs]

d. Ethical Reasoning [3 hrs]

**5. Integrative and Applied Learning** - This outcome is intentionally addressed throughout the undergraduate curriculum, with special emphasis in general education courses and disciplinary courses at the capstone level. It is the crowning proficiency; as such, the Committee on General Education would measure it at intervals along the undergraduate curriculum and at the senior level.

STRATEGY: **Guidelines and pedagogies** will be articulated/described and suggested for courses to incorporate a higher order Integrative Learning component, i.e., one that includes an assignment involving the synthesis and or transfer of learning to new situations. Obvious early steps are (1) to determine if higher order integrative learning strategies exist in capstone courses, and (2) to determine other upper-level disciplinary courses in which such strategies exist, with particular emphasis on C-I, Service-Learning, Study Abroad, and Internships.

## Additional Considerations

1. Process for designating courses as qualifying for inclusion in the Integrative Learning Core:
  - a. The LSU Faculty Senate Committee on General Education will augment its current process to designate courses. Specifically, courses that faculty develop will continue to meet the two existing criteria (alignment with disciplinary area and alignment to one or more learning competencies) and will simply demonstrate a pedagogical approach that includes an integrative learning component.
  - b. The Committee on General Education will provide guidance and resources for pedagogical tools such as signature assignments that will serve to qualify courses as integrative learning inclusive.
2. The Office of Academic Affairs will support the establishment of a faculty development unit on integrative learning to support career enrichment for faculty and graduate students teaching courses in the Integrative Learning Core.
3. The Integrative Learning Core will be phased in over 3-5 years, beginning with an initial cohort of courses in the fall of 2018. One approach is to follow the prescribed course recertification process.
4. The Faculty Senate General Education Committee will need to develop a set of guidelines for transfer credit.
5. All LSU dual enrollment courses that are also approved as part of the Integrative Learning Core must satisfy the conditions of the proposal approved by the Committee on General Education for any given course. The same applies for courses delivered online.



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