

ISU Academic Program Review: General Education AY 2022-2023

approved by GERC on April 11, 2023

accepted by UCC on April 13, 2023

accepted by Academic Affairs on April 26, 2023

ISU Academic Program Review: General Education AY 2022-2023

Self-Study Chair: Joanne Tokle, Chair, General Education Requirements Committee (GERC)

GERC Members:

- Jim Skidmore, Arts & Letters, Fine Arts/Humanities
- Erika Fulton, Arts & Letters, Social & Behavioral Science
- Shu-Yuan Lin, Education, Vice Chair
- Cathy Gray, Library
- Anna Grinath, Science and Engineering, Bioscience/Chemistry/Geosciences
- DeWayne Derryberry, Science and Engineering, Math/Engineering/Physics/Computer Science
- Mike Matusek, Technology
- Omotayo Omotowa, Division of Health Sciences
- Leciel Bono, Division of Health Sciences
- Joanne Tokle, Business

Ex-Officio (Non-Voting) Members:

- Karen Appleby, Academic Affairs
- Ann Hackert, Office of Assessment
- Hala Abou Arraj, Registrar
- Sacha Johnson, Instructional Technology Resource Center
- Karen Fullmer, Office of Academic Advising
- Bob Houghton, Undergraduate Curriculum Council, Vice Chair
- Catherine Read, Administrative Assistant

I. Executive Summary and Recommendations

- The General Education program at Idaho State University in 2022-2023 included 173 courses, the majority of which are housed in the Colleges of Arts and Letters and Science and Engineering.
- The General Education program is overseen by the General Education Requirements Committee (GERC), which reports to the Undergraduate Curriculum Council (UCC). GERC reviews proposed changes to the general education curriculum and oversees the assessment and review process for the program.
- This report is the culmination of a five-year cycle of review, consisting of annual reviews for all courses and objective reviews that occur once each cycle.
- A few courses were added to the General Education Program during 2017-2022, and a similar number were removed.
- The Objective reviews indicated a need for help with simplifying or streamlining assessment plans, and guidance from GERC in implementing them; concern about Early College Program (ECP) courses; the need to include General Education competencies on syllabi; and issues with lack of data.
- The quality of annual assessment reports has improved over the five-year period, and in the most recent reports, many departments expressed their intentions to improve the assessment process in order to collect more actionable data. GERC recently updated the annual report form to better capture information on closing the loop.
- The level of student achievement is fairly consistent across the objectives, with a little over 80% of students meeting expectations for learning outcomes (competencies).
- Enrollments in General Education courses fell 5.5% between 2017 and 2022. Enrollment in ECP sections vary by objective, with some increasing and some decreasing. Enrollment in non-ECP sections is down overall, with a few exceptions. Enrollment in online sections increased in every objective, while enrollment in non-online sections fell across the board with few exceptions.
- Overall, 2022 pass rates in General Education ranged from 83% for Oral Communication to 95% for Humanities and Natural Science lab. Pass rates for men and women are nearly the same, and pass rates for different races/ethnicities vary somewhat but interpretation is difficult in some cases due to very small sample sizes.
- The majority of General Education courses are taught by part-time and/or non-tenure track faculty (excluding ECP instructors).

Recommendations

Students

- Reach out to students to determine how we can better meet their needs. For example, are we scheduling courses at optimal times for them? Are we offering courses that pique their interests? What kinds of courses are they interested in that we don't offer? Do we offer the optimal number and mix of courses?

- Continue to support ECP instructors to ensure quality and accessibility of general education in the high schools, so that students will be well prepared upon matriculation into college.
- Continue to encourage and incentivize general education faculty to use quality Open Educational Resource (OER) materials to improve accessibility and affordability.

Faculty

- Continue to provide professional development opportunities through the Office of Assessment, Program for Instructional Effectiveness (PIE), and the Instructional Technology Resource Center (ITRC), particularly in aligning courses with competencies and finding ways to meaningfully assess student performance in those competencies. Increase incentives to participate in Quality Matters or similar programs.
- GERC should continue improving guidelines for assessment plans and processes and using data to improve the program. Assessment plans should be updated at least every five to seven years.
- Consider whether the three objectives not mandated by ISBOE (7, 8 and 9) are reflective of ISU's mission, vision, and values.
- The General Education Matriculation (GEM) Committee will likely conduct a comprehensive review of Idaho's general education framework in the near future. While there is currently no set timeline for the review, Idaho State University may wish to pause on any significant changes in its general education program until that process is completed.

II. Program Overview

Why is General Education important?

General Education builds foundational skills that students need throughout their lives and their careers. The Idaho State University [catalog](#) and Idaho State Board of Education [Policy III.N.](#) both emphasize the need for lifelong and broad-based skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the workplace and communities.

The General Education curriculum is shared by all students, regardless of their majors. Hence, it should reflect institutional values and identity. Because the complex problems of today demand creative and innovative thinking, skills and knowledge beyond students' disciplines can provide insight and new perspectives as they face today's and tomorrow's challenges. In addition, several of the skills acquired in general education, including communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and creative thinking, frequently appear on lists of skills in demand by employers.

Program objectives and student learning outcomes

Idaho State University's General Education Program consists of nine objectives, the first six of which are required by Idaho State Board of Education (ISBOE) policy: Written Communication, Oral Communication, Mathematical Ways of Knowing, Scientific Ways of Knowing, Humanistic and Artistic

Ways of Knowing, and Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing. The remaining objectives consist of “institutionally-designated credits,” of which students must complete six credits. Students must fulfill the Cultural Diversity objective (Objective 9), and then choose between Information Literacy (Objective 8) and Critical Thinking (Objective 7). The full list of objectives and competencies (student learning outcomes) are available in the [undergraduate catalog](#).

Program location and delivery modes

While most sections of general education courses are offered on the Pocatello campus, a number are available online, at outreach campuses, or in local high schools through the Early College Program (ECP). In 2022, 23% of general education student credit hours (SCH) were in the ECP, and 33% were delivered online.

Other program characteristics

The 2022-2023 Undergraduate Catalog lists 173 general education courses. The table below details the number of courses in each objective/sub-objective.

Objective	Number of courses	Notes
1—Written Communication	4	Includes one P course*
2—Oral Communication	1	
3—Mathematical WOK**	16	Includes three P courses*
4—Humanities***	9	
4—Fine Arts***	13	
4—Foreign Languages***	22	
5--Scientific WOK**	24	Includes 9 lab courses
6--Social & Behavioral WOK**#	19	
7—Critical Thinking	17	
8—Information Literacy	6	
9—Cultural Diversity	42	

*P courses provide co-requisite supplemental instruction for students not meeting prerequisites

**WOK is Ways of Knowing

***Students must select two courses from two different categories for Humanistic and Artistic WOK.

#Students must select two courses from two different course prefixes.

III. Response to Previous APR Recommendation(s)

This is the first General Education program review since the adoption of the objectives in 2014; hence, there are no previous recommendations to address. The General Education program was addressed in Standard 1.C.6 of the Idaho State University Year Seven Self-Study in August, 2021. No deficiencies or issues were noted in that review.

Prior to this review, faculty were contacted via email in Fall 2021 for feedback regarding the “direction, focus, or form” of our General Education program. A small number of faculty responded and their comments were used in developing a broader Qualtrics survey that was sent to faculty in Spring 2022.

A small number of faculty (approximately 90) responded to the Spring 2022 survey. A report of survey results was submitted to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in Fall 2022. As noted in the report, “Concern for student achievement permeated the responses in this survey, but the details of the best way to support and promote student learning within the framework of ISU’s General Education Program varied so much as to make identifying a consensus of changes to make or even what the problems are nearly impossible.” The [GERC Faculty Survey Report from Spring 2022](#) is available on the GERC website.

IV. Program Alignment

Alignment with university mission, vision, and strategic plan, and with state requirements

Idaho State University’s General Education program support the institution’s [Mission, Vision, and Values](#), which are listed below:

Mission: We engage students through learning and research opportunities that improve the intellectual vigor, cultural vitality, and health of our communities.

Vision: We inspire a passion for knowledge and discovery.

Values: integrity; community; inclusivity; teamwork; shared responsibility; learning.

The General Education program supports Goal 1 (Increase student access, opportunity, retention, and success) of the ISU Strategic Plan by providing a quality foundation for students’ success in their major programs.

The General Education program provides students with opportunities to explore disciplines outside of their major, in line with ISU’s vision of inspiring a passion for knowledge and discovery. Because all undergraduate students take the general education curriculum, it is the one part of their programs of study that everyone shares.

General Education program alignment with state requirements

As noted above, six of the nine objectives are required by Idaho SBOE Policy III.N. During the five-year review cycle, ISBOE implemented a “[common course listing](#)” for ease of transferring credits between public institutions in Idaho. The common courses have the same prefix, number, and title at each of the eight state institutions. This requirement necessitated a few ISU courses to be renumbered or renamed.

General education program support of other units in the institution

While the majority of general education credits are offered by the Colleges of Arts and Letters and Science and Engineering, the General Education program provides foundational knowledge and skills for all undergraduate programs.

V. Student Learning Outcome Summary

[The General Education Requirements Committee \(GERC\) website](#) provides details on adding and removing general education courses, assessing courses and the program, assessment plans, and resources. An overview of these processes is discussed in this section.

Process for establishing, reviewing and revising student learning outcomes

Establishment of student learning outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes (competencies) for Objectives 1-6 were established in 2014 by a statewide committee of faculty in specific discipline groups; all objectives were approved by ISU in 2015. The discipline groups for these objectives meet annually to discuss issues of importance to general education, including revisions to competencies, which follow a three-year cycle. Competencies were last updated in 2021.

The General Education Requirements Committee (GERC), which reports to the Undergraduate Curriculum Council (UCC), reviews proposed changes to the General Education curriculum and oversees the assessment process for the program.

Review process: Annual reports

The assessment process begins with general education faculty creating and implementing assessment plans for their courses, subject to approval by GERC. Faculty submit an annual report for each general education course to GERC by November 1 of each year. The annual reports include assessment results for the student learning outcomes along with descriptions of assessment instruments and actions taken as a result of previous findings. GERC reviews the annual reports and provides feedback to the faculty contacts and their departments.

Review process: Departmental and objective reviews

Departmental faculty conduct five-year assessment reviews based on the annual reports. These reviews describe overall findings along with recommendations for changes to the learning outcomes or the assessment process itself.

The next step in the assessment process is the objective review report. Objective reviews are conducted on a [schedule](#) over a 5-year cycle. As of Spring 2022, objective reviews were completed for all nine objectives. Objective review committees consist of representatives from all departments with courses in the particular objective as well as representation from the GERC membership. These reviews may be used to modify or remove courses from the General Education curriculum, or lead to recommendations to adjust learning outcomes or eliminate an objective (7-9 only) altogether.

Results of student learning outcome analysis

A summary of results from objective reviews and annual reports are discussed below.

Objective review reports

All nine objectives have completed the first round of objective review reports. Written Communication and Oral Communication will submit their second Objective Review Reports to GERC in Spring 2023. Main recommendations and resulting actions are discussed below. These recommendations include changes to competencies, changes in the number of courses offered, assessment, and other.

Competencies. Some objective reviews recommended changes to competencies. Objective reviews for Mathematical Ways of Knowing, Scientific Ways of Knowing, and Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing all recommended changes to competencies. These recommendations went forward to the annual General Education Summit, and working with colleagues from across the state, faculty proposed changes that were later approved by the Idaho State Board of Education. The Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing objective review discussed issues with two of the competencies, but these issues have not yet been resolved and require state level approval. The objective review for Critical Thinking recommended wording changes to two competencies; these changes did not require state level approval and have been implemented.

Changes in course offerings. Most of the objective reviews did not recommend adding or removing courses from the current list. The objective review for Cultural Diversity recommended that courses no longer offered should be removed, and those changes will take effect in the 2023-2024 catalog. In practice, relatively few courses are added or removed.

Since 2016, twelve courses have been added, of which four are “P” courses, and one course was added via the common course list mandated by the Idaho State Board of Education (MATH 1143). P, or plus, courses, provide supplemental instruction to students who did not place into the original course.

Two courses have been added to Mathematical Ways of Knowing (EDMT 2270 and 2271); two courses have been added to Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing (CSD 1152 and ENGL 2215), and three have been added to Cultural Diversity (CSD 2257, ANTH/HIST 2258, and POLS 2231).

Courses that have been removed from General Education objectives include GEOL 1108 (Information Literacy); LATN 1101/1102 (Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing); and ARBC 2201/2202, FREN 2201/2202, GERM 2201/2202, and LATN 2201/2202 (Cultural Diversity).

The Humanistic and Artistic WOK Objective Review Committee recommended that no new courses be added to that objective. While two courses were recently added, two were also removed.

Assessment. A variety of issues surfaced regarding assessment plans and the results of outcome evaluations. These issues are summarized below by objective.

1. **Written Communication.** The current assessment plan is satisfactory. The majority of students are meeting the outcomes, but it was noted that grades in some ECP sections are inflated relative to assessment results.
2. **Oral Communication.** The review recommended that all delivery modes be included in future reports. Achievement in competency vi (Demonstrate knowledge of key theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts in the Communication discipline, as applied to oral communication) has improved and students are meeting expectations in the other competencies.
3. **Mathematical Ways of Knowing.** Lack of faculty participation and understanding of the process has resulted in a lack of data in the Math courses. MGT 2216 (Business Statistics) and RCET 1372 (Calculus for Electronics) have successfully implemented their assessment plans and used the results to improve outcomes.
4. **Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing.** Some departments find the assessment reporting process cumbersome and recommend that it be streamlined. English recommended more consistent inclusion of General Education goals in syllabi, and reported some issues with ECP sections. Most students met benchmarks. Departments need help with inter-rater or intra-rater reliability methods. Professional development opportunities would be welcome. While the recommendation to allow students to fulfill Objective 4 by taking two language courses would be beneficial to mastery of language skills, State Board Policy III.N. requires six credits of Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing from two different disciplines.
5. **Scientific Ways of Knowing.** Most departments were satisfied with assessment plans and students were meeting expectations. The objective review recommended that GERC should provide guidance regarding consistency of selecting materials for evaluation, the number of students to be evaluated, how to archive artifacts, the threshold for “meets expectations,” and provide an example or template of a good assessment plan.
6. **Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing.** No significant concerns regarding assessment were noted. Some departments expressed concerns about ECP sections, such as grade inflation and preparation of students for subsequent courses.
7. **Critical Thinking.** Departments with courses in this objective reported a variety of concerns. On a positive note, POLS 2202 reported that the assessment plan was instrumental in redistributing liaisons for ECP sections. Other departments reported issues with consistency of deadlines, and plans that needed to be simplified or lacked specificity and clarity.
8. **Information Literacy.** Most departments were satisfied with their assessment plans, and most students met expectations.
9. **Cultural Diversity.** Several instructors were advised to update their syllabi and assessments to align with the student learning outcomes.

Recurring themes in the objective reviews include the need for help with assessment plans, especially in simplifying or streamlining them, and guidance from GERC in implementing them; concern about ECP courses; the need to include General Education objectives and competencies on syllabi; and issues with lack of data. Overall, review committees were satisfied with the number of courses in the objectives and with the role of each objective within the framework of ISU's General Education program.

Annual review reports

All General Education courses are required to file annual reports for the previous academic year by November 1, except for courses undergoing five-year objective reviews in that reporting cycle. A Qualtrics form is used to collect information on which learning outcomes were assessed, the materials and processes used for assessment, and brief summaries of findings and plans for closing the loop. The form was updated for the 2021-2022 reporting period to include sample size and more specific questions on follow up actions resulting from previous findings.

Appendix Tables V-A.1 – V-A.9 provide summary annual report information for a sample of courses in each objective, as a full description of annual reports for all 173 General Education courses would be extensive. Rather, the table highlights examples that are representative of courses in each objective. The table includes the assessment tool, sample and modalities, percentage of students who met expectations, and planned response to the results.

Appendix Tables V-A.10 and V-A.11 provide summary statistics of the percentage of students meeting expectations by objective and competency, and yearly averages for 2015-2016 through 2019-2020. Data is not yet available for more recent time periods. Data reported in 2015-2016 were for a limited number of courses as that was the first reporting year.

Table V-A.10. shows that the average of students meeting expectations for each objective varies from 68 percent in Written Communication to 88 percent in Cultural Diversity, with most objectives having just over 80 percent of students meeting expectations. Table V-A.11 reports trends in the percentage of students meeting expectations by objective, with most objectives showing no change or a small increase over the five-year period. The percentage of students meeting expectations in the Critical Thinking objective decreased slightly in 2019-2020.

A number of courses have plans to improve the assessment process itself in order to obtain better, more actionable data. Examples include:

- The Composition Committee developed a capstone assignment for ENGL 1102 (Objective 1) to collect essays that more consistently address the majority of competencies.
- Mathematics reported that individual instructors did not have a consistent definition of "reasonably close," and there was confusion regarding the required data needed for MATH 1143 (Objective 3).
- The College of Technology plans to revise the assessment plan for TGE 1257 (Objective 4) to make the process more reliable and practical.
- Psychology is working with instructors for greater consistency in assessment; Sociology continues to refine assignments and rubrics to ensure more consistency in evaluation. Both have courses in Objective 6.

- Anthropology will provide greater clarity in instructions for ANTH 1102 (Objective 6), as will ACAD 1111 (Objective 8).

Other actions planned or taken based on assessment results include those to specifically address deficiencies in performance on competencies. For example, COMM 1101 (Objective 2) recognized a need to improve mastery of material for online students, and liaisons to work more closely with ECP instructors. PHYS 1113 (Objective 5) will add additional explanation of a theory section, with more questions or prompts to target competency iv (describe the relevance of scientific principles) more effectively. Political Science continues to work with ECP instructors on improving the high school courses.

VI. Students/Enrollments

Enrollments in general education courses by objective are discussed in this section with supporting tables in the appendix. Enrollments are reported without international students, as 2017 enrollments were significantly affected by an unusually large number of international students at that time. By 2022, the number of international students had returned to historical norms.

Data for two of the nine objectives, Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing and Scientific Ways of Knowing, are disaggregated for reporting purposes. Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing courses are further disaggregated into Fine Arts, Humanities, and Foreign Languages. Scientific Ways of Knowing courses are disaggregated into Applied or Health Science, Natural Science, and Natural Science lab.

Overall enrollments in general education courses (Appendix Table VI-A)

Overall enrollments in General Education courses fell 5.5% between 2017 and 2022. Enrollments in most objectives fell significantly over the 5-year period in question, with a few exceptions, even after removing international student enrollments. The nearly 20% increase in the mathematics objective is mainly due to the addition of MATH 1143 into the General Education program as required by the State Board of Education. The increase in “Applied or Health Science” in Objective 5 is entirely due to increased enrollment in NTD 2239. The increase in Objective #8, Information Literacy, is mostly due to increased enrollments in FIN 1115, Personal Finance. Enrollment increases in Objective #9, Cultural Diversity, stems from a variety of courses, including CMLT 2208; EDUC 2204; HIST 2201, 2252, and 2254; SOC 2201; and SPAN 2201 and 2202.

Enrollments in ECP and non-ECP courses (Appendix Table VI-B)

Changes in ECP enrollments between 2017 and 2022 vary by objective. Some objectives have experienced significant increases, including Written Communication (+31.6%), Foreign Languages (+31.9%), and Information Literacy (+1,100%). The increase in Mathematics (+72.5%) is attributable to the addition of MATH 1143 as a General Education course. ECP enrollments have declined in Oral

Communication (-64.3%); Fine Arts (-11.1%); Natural Science (-5.6%) and Natural Science lab (-12.0%); Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing (-21.3%); and Critical Thinking (-29.9%).

Enrollments in non-ECP sections are down in most objectives except Information Literacy (+5.7%), Cultural Diversity (+3.0%), Mathematics (+5.4%), and Applied or Health Science (recently added). The largest declines were observed in Oral Communication (-24.4%); Humanities (-23.5%); Natural Science (-19.6%); Behavioral and Social Science (-18.4%); and Critical Thinking (-17.7%).

Enrollments in online and non-online courses (Appendix Table VI-C)

Enrollments in online courses have increased between 2017 and 2022 in every objective. Growth ranged from +10.0% in Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing to +361.2% in Natural Science lab.

Enrollments in non-online courses (face-to-face, hyflex, etc.) have declined in every objective except Information Literacy, which is due to increased enrollment in FIN 1115, Personal Finance, and Mathematics, which is attributable to the addition of MATH 1143 in General Education. The largest declines were observed in Oral Communication (-45.9%); Foreign Languages (-37.2%); Fine Arts (-37.2%); Social and Behavioral Sciences (-30.7%); and Critical Thinking (-35.6%).

Pass rates in General Education courses (Tables VI-D and VI-E)

How are students faring in the General Education program? An examination of pass rates in General Education courses is encouraging. Overall pass rates in 2022 ranged from 83% for Oral Communication to 95% for Humanities and Natural Science lab.

Pass rates are similar for men and women, albeit slightly lower for men than for women, usually by 1-2 percentage points. Pass rates for men are slightly higher than for women in Mathematics (88% for men, 87% for women) and Information Literacy (94% for men, 93% for women).

Appendix Table VI-E provides a detailed breakdown of pass rates by race and ethnicity. The top number in each cell is the pass rate and the bottom number is the sample size. Very small sample sizes for some categories make interpretation/inference problematic. For example, only two Asian students were enrolled in the Applied/Health Science course for Objective 5, and only five Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students were enrolled in Humanities courses.

Categories with larger numbers of students included Hispanic/Latino; Two or More Races; Unknown race/ethnicity; and White/Non-Hispanic. No one group dominated in achieving the highest pass rates by objective. For example, Asian students achieved the highest pass rates for Oral Communication, Humanities, and Cultural Diversity, while Black/African American students achieved the highest pass rates for Foreign Languages and Humanities (tie with Asian students).

American Indian/Alaskan Native students tended to have lower pass rates, but even so, their pass rates were usually not notably different from other groups, with the exception of some instances with very small sample sizes.

Pass rates varied the least across race/ethnicity categories in the following Objectives: Foreign Languages; Natural Science; Natural Science lab; Critical Thinking; and Cultural Diversity.

VII. Student Support Services

Advising for general education requirements is provided by the Office of Academic Advising and college advisors throughout the university.

VIII. Faculty

Characteristics of General Education Faculty (Tables VIII-A and VIII-B)

Table VIII-A shows the percentage of course sections taught by full-time and part-time faculty in 2017 and 2022, with ECP instructors excluded. In 2022, the majority of General Education sections were taught by part-time faculty, except for Fine Arts (49% part-time), Applied or Health Science (15%), Natural Science (45%), and Information Literacy (49%). For most objectives, the percentage of sections taught by part-time faculty increased between 2017 and 2022.

Table VIII-B shows the percent of course sections taught by tenure status of faculty, with ECP instructors excluded, for 2017 and 2022. The percentage of sections taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty in 2022 varied from none in Foreign Languages and Applied or Health Science to 44% in Information Literacy. The percentage of sections taught by tenure-track or tenured faculty increased between 2017 and 2022 in Written Communication, Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Science, Social and Behavioral Science, and Information Literacy.

IX. Program Resources

The General Education program has no specific budget line except for a portion of the time of an administrative assistant who provides support for GERC, and administrative and staff members that participate in GERC. Faculty representatives from each academic unit serve on GERC and the state discipline groups and this activity helps fulfill the service portion of their workload. Students are advised of General Education requirements by the Office of Academic Advising and departmental and college advisors. New Student Orientation (NSO) serves as an important source of information for incoming freshmen about General Education requirements.

X. Overall Program Evaluation: SWOT Analysis

GERC conducted a SWOT analysis on February 14, 2023, with the assistance of Darren Blagburn, Director of Operations/Plans, Academic Affairs. Details of the analysis are in Appendix X. A general discussion is provided below.

The General Education program at Idaho State University, like general education programs at institutions across the country, provides the foundational skills and knowledge students need for success in their chosen fields of study and later success in their careers. General education coursework offers students their first college-level taste of communication, quantitative reasoning, creativity, information literacy, and other skills often cited by business and industry as necessary in today's and tomorrow's workplaces.

Strengths

The General Education program exhibits many strengths from a student's perspective, from a wide variety of courses from which to choose in Objectives 3-9, to a variety of delivery modes, including online courses and those available in the high schools via the Early College Program. Pass rates are relatively high in most General Education courses, and a number of courses have reported an increase in the proportion of students meeting expectations for the learning outcomes after several years of assessment. General Education courses that incorporate Open Educational Resources (OER) or low-cost texts and materials increase affordability and accessibility. Most importantly, general education coursework provides valuable skills and prerequisite knowledge for later success in their majors and in the workforce, and fosters awareness of issues and perspectives outside their discipline.

From a faculty perspective, support for the General Education program provides resources that are applicable to other teaching responsibilities as well. The Office of Assessment supports GERC and General Education, as does the Instructional Technology Resource Center (ITRC) and PIE (Program for Instructional Effectiveness). Nearly all General Education courses have an assessment plan and their learning outcomes are reviewed on a regular basis. GERC provides feedback to instructors via the annual reports and offers guidance regarding assessment processes.

Weaknesses

While students have multiple delivery options for many of their General Education courses, there are some exceptions. Some options are limited based on location (for outreach campuses) and for lab courses. Declining enrollment in traditional (face to face) classes results in fewer scheduling options for the remaining sections. Challenges regarding assurance of equal experiences of ECP vs on-campus sections are ongoing. Students also need awareness of the importance of general education in college and their careers and life experiences.

Faculty experience challenges in the General Education program as well. Teaching expertise doesn't always translate easily from traditional delivery to online courses, and incentives for participation in the Quality+ program are meager. Membership turnover on GERC has led to inconsistent feedback to faculty

regarding assessment and annual reporting, and there is general lack of support/recognition for serving on GERC, departmental assessment committees, and for teaching introductory courses in general. Like students, faculty also lack awareness of the importance of general education.

Opportunities

How can we address the weaknesses noted above? First, we can revisit scheduling of the General Education courses to better meet the needs of students. Many online courses are available, but some students would prefer traditional delivery if they could fit it into their schedules, and some topics are better offered in the classroom to students not adept at learning online.

Improved communication with ECP instructors, and increased support for them, will in turn lead to improved mastery of learning outcomes to set students up for success when they do come to campus. We can also increase access to regular sections of college courses for high school students.

The General Education program is the one part of the curriculum that is common to all undergraduate students, and as such, provides an opportunity to reinforce the Bengal identity of all students. Strengthening the connection between the General Education program and the University mission, vision, and values, serves that purpose as well.

GERC can continue to improve assessment processes and procedures to make it more manageable and hence more meaningful as a tool to increase student success. Recognizing faculty for excellence in teaching general education courses and their service in assessment provides an incentive for participating in this continuous improvement process.

The rise of artificial intelligence provides a further impetus to use alternative or more authentic assessments. Increasing collaboration in general education across departments and removing silos may also lead to better experiences for students and faculty.

Finally, we need to change the perception that general education is not really necessary, that it is another box to check or a hurdle to leap, when in fact it is the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

Threats

Cost differentials between tuition rates at Idaho State University and its competitors, as well as the Early College Program, pose a continuing threat to the on campus General Education program. Students can take general education courses at any of the state's four community colleges at one-third the cost of a four-year institution and transfer them seamlessly. In addition, high school students can take dual enrollment (early college) courses at no cost and transfer them easily. This has already led to declining enrollments in general education courses over the five-year review period. Increases in tuition at Idaho State University will further exacerbate those cost differentials.

The wide-spread perception that general education is not really necessary, that it is just one more hurdle in the path of earning a degree, combined with a general lack of respect for higher education by the public, also erodes support for general education. Without a strong foundation of basic skills like written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking, students may not reach their potential in their chosen disciplines.

APPENDICES

Table V-A.1. Written Communication Learning Outcome Assessment, 2020-2021, ENGL 1101/1102

Student Learning Outcome (competency)	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Use flexible writing strategies				
-ii.- Adopt strategies appropriate to the situation				
-iii.- Use inquiry-based strategies to conduct research				
-iv.- Use rhetorically appropriate strategies to evaluate				
-v.- Address readers' biases and assumptions	essays	6 essays per instructor	77% met expectations	Composition Committee developed capstone assignment for ENGL 1102 to collect essays that more consistently address the majority of competencies.
-vi.- Use appropriate conventions for documenting source materials	essays	6 essays per instructor	73% met expectations	
-vii.- Communicate key concepts				

Table V-A.2. Oral Communication Learning Outcome Assessment, 2020-2021, COMM 1101

Student Learning Outcome (competency)	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Develop information resources	Exam	All modalities	82% met expectations	Need to improve mastery of material for online students and liaisons need to work more closely with ECP instructors.
-ii.- Evidence based reasoning for influencing attitudes			77% met expectations	
-iii.- Adapt spoken messages to needs				
-iv.- Employ effective behaviors that support communication			80% met expectations	
-v.- Listen in order to evaluate			83% met expectations	
-vi.- Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts			76% met expectations	

Table V-A.3. Mathematical Ways of Knowing Student Learning Outcome Assessment, 2021-2022, Example Courses

Student Learning Outcome (competency) and example course	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Interpret mathematical concepts MATH 1170	Exam question	Sample of 24 students (65% of total enrollment).	33% met expectations	None recommended.
-ii.- Represent information/data MATH 1143	Exam/quiz	Sample of 224 students (35% of total enrollment). Committee of 6 members scored problems using a rubric.	6/224 scored 3; 68/224 scored 2; 105/224 scored 1; 41/224 scored 0	Individual instructors did not have a consistent definition of “reasonably close,” and there was confusion regarding the required data needed for the conclusion. Wording will be clarified and instructors will receive instructions on what constitutes an appropriate answer.
-iii.- Use appropriate strategies/procedures when solving problems. MATH 1153	Problem assigned specifically to assess the objective	Sample of 22 students out of 125 enrolled. Includes face to face, online, and ECP students.	26/63 meets expectations; 27/62 partially meet; 4/62 did not meet expectations. Students generally did not include enough context in their answers.	Communicate with instructors the ideal answer and what needs to be emphasized more when teaching. Results will be shared with all who teach the class.
-iv.- Draw reasonable conclusions based on quantitative information. MGT 2216	JMP/Excel Lab exam	All students (162) were assessed, including online sections.	92% met expectations for competency iv.	None needed in this cycle.

Table V-A.4. Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing Student Learning Outcome Assessment, 2021-2022, Example Courses

Student Learning Outcome (competency) and course	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Recognize and describe works (ART 1100)	Exam	85 students assessed. Includes all modes of course delivery.	91% met expectations	No changes proposed.
-ii.- Distinguish and apply methodologies (SPAN 1101)	Exams and compositions	125 students assessed (100% of enrollment) ECP data missing	91% met expectations	None.
-iii.- Differentiate elements specific to the discipline (SPAN 1102)	Exams and compositions	24 students assessed (100% of enrollment)	94% met expectations	None.
-iv.- Analyze texts in context (TGE 1257)	Essay exam questions and case studies	27 students assessed (100% of enrollment)	86% met expectations	Plan to revise assessment plan to make process more reliable and practical.
-v.- Interpret works through art, language, or performance (FREN 1101)	Exam questions	33 students assessed (81% of total). Includes face to face and online sections	100% met expectations	None.
-vi.- Develop critical perspectives grounded in evidence-based analysis (RUSS 1101)	Multiple, including online speaking and listening	6 students assessed (100% of enrollment)	100% met expectations	None.
-vii.- Demonstrate self-reflection and respect for diverse viewpoints (ENGL 1175)	Syllabi	No direct assessment this cycle, as outlines in assessment plan		Encouraged faculty to be more systematic in including learning competencies

Table V-A.5. Scientific Ways of Knowing Student Learning Outcome Assessment, 2021-2022, Example Courses

Student Learning Outcome (competency) and course	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Apply knowledge and models to analyze and/or predict (BIOL 2227)	Lab investigations	300 students assessed (90% of total)	90% met expectations	None
-ii.- Apply scientific reasoning (CHEM 1101)	Exam questions	249 students assessed (95% of total enrollment)	84% met expectations	May change assessment instrument to national final exam
-iii.- Interpret and communicate scientific information (NTD 2239)	Exam and assignment questions	382 students assessed (62% of total enrollment)	88% met expectations	Assessments will remain the same but new exam questions may be used.
-iv.- Describe the relevance of scientific principles (PHYS 1113)	Lab reports	20 students assessed (16% of total enrollment) ECP reports missing	35% met expectations	Additional explanation of theory section, with more questions or prompts to target competency more effectively
-v.- Test a hypothesis and form a defensible conclusion (ANTH 2230)	Exam questions, lab exercises	120 students assessed (50% of total enrollment)	90% met expectations	Re-evaluate lab exercises for improvements online.

Table V-A.6. Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing Student Learning Outcome Assessment, 2021-2022, Example Courses

Student Learning Outcome (competency) and course	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Demonstrate knowledge of frameworks (ANTH 1102)	Exams and fieldwork journal assignments	32 students assessed (50% of total)	75% met expectations	More clarity in instructions
-ii.- Describe self and the world (PSYC 1101)	Learning surveys and assignments	727 students assessed (73% of total enrollment)	76% met expectations	Are working with instructors for greater consistency.
-iii.- Utilize research methods/problem solving (ECON 2201)	Exam questions	290 students (100% of total enrollment). All course modalities included.	74% met expectations	None.
-iv.- Evaluate how reasoning informs decisions (PSYC 1101)	Learning surveys and assignments	727 students (73% of total enrollment). Includes all modalities.	68% met expectations	Are working with instructors for greater consistency.
-v.- Identify impact . . . across space and time (SOC 1101)	Writing assignment	682 students assessed (100% of total enrollment). Includes all modalities.	74% met expectations	None.

Table V-A.7. Critical Thinking Student Learning Outcome Assessment, 2021-2022, Example Courses

Student Learning Outcome (competency) and course	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Formulate problems and analyze (SOC 2248)	Final paper	167 students (100% of total enrollment)	80% met expectations	Continue to refine assignments and rubrics to ensure more consistent grading.
-ii.- Analyze ambiguous problems (ANTH 1107)	Exam questions & assignments	31 students (50% of total enrollment)	56% met expectations	Small changes to assignments
-iii.- Apply relevant information (CS 1181)	Exam questions	110 students (100% of total enrollment)	75% met expectations	Are altering the programming language used
-iv.- Diverse perspectives and solutions (ANTH 1107)	Exam questions & assignments	31 students (50% of total enrollment)	85% met expectations	Small changes to assignments
-v.- Articulate reasoned framework (POLS 2202)	Exam questions & assignments	25 students (19% of total enrollment). Includes ECP.	79% met expectations	Continue working to improve ECP courses.
-vi.- Articulate results of thinking process (POLS 2202)	Exam questions & assignments	25 students (19% of total enrollment). Includes ECP.	82% met expectations	Continue working to improve ECP courses.

Table V-A.8. Information Literacy Student Learning Outcome Assessment, 2021-2022, Example Courses

Student Learning Outcome (competency) and course	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Determine information needed (ACAD 1111)	Annotated bibliographies	11 students assessed (18% of total enrollment). Face to face, online, Bengal Bridge, Honors	100% met expectations	Add explanation and clarity to instructions
-ii.- Identify sources and gather information (ACAD 1111)	Annotated bibliographies	11 students assessed (18% of total enrollment). Face to face, online, Bengal Bridge, Honors	100% met expectations	Add explanation and clarity to instructions
-iii.- Evaluate credibility of sources (LIBR 1115)	Annotated bibliographies	31 students assessed (15% of total enrollment). Includes all modalities.	94% met expectations	None.
-iv.- Understand issues surrounding information				
-v.- Use information to accomplish a specific purpose				

Table V-A.9. Information Literacy Student Learning Outcome Assessment, 2021-2022, Example Courses

Student Learning Outcome (competency) and course	Assessment Tool	Data Analysis Method (sample, modalities)	Results	Actions Taken
-i.- Identify characteristics of diverse communities (EDUC 2204)	Work samples	167 students assessed (100% of total enrollment). Includes all modalities but one adjunct faculty did not submit data.	95% met expectations	Department may conduct inter-rater reliability in addition to communication with adjunct instructors.
-ii.- Describe influence of cultural attributes (GLBL 2202)	Short essay questions	120 students assessed (90% of total enrollment).	91% met expectations	Continue updating syllabus
-iii.- Apply knowledge of diverse cultures (ANTH 2237)	Exam questions	120 students assessed (100% of total enrollment)	96% met expectations	None.

Table V-A.10. Percent of students meeting expectations by Objective and competency, averages from 2015-16 through 2019-2020

Objective	Comp #1	Comp #2	Comp #3	Comp #4	Comp #5	Comp #6	Comp #7	Objective average
Written Comm	65.4	62.0	85.0	100.0	92.3	73.5	31.3	68.3
Oral Comm	78.6	70.4		77.0	77.2	67.0		74.0
Mathematical WOK	72.9	72.2	72.5	79.8				73.4
Humanistic WOK	89.1	87.2	84.5	84.0	81.4	82.7	83.6	84.6
Scientific WOK	83.3	87.4	85.9	85.4	86.0			85.6
Social and Behavioral WOK	81.8	82.5	82.4	82.0	81.7			82.1
Critical Thinking	81.9	80.0	83.0	87.8	86.1	87.1		84.3
Information Literacy	84.3	87.9	85.8	84.5	80.8			84.6
Cultural Diversity	89.6	88.6	86.5					88.2

Table V-A.11. Percent of students meeting expectations by Objective, yearly averages, 2015-16 through 2019-2020

Objective	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Written Comm	100		67	56.3	85.1
Oral Comm	65.2	73.4	75.4	81.0	75.2
Mathematical WOK	71.2	73.8	74.7	72.4	74.9
Humanistic WOK	86.2	77.9	85.8	84.9	88.4
Scientific WOK	83.6	87.2	78.6	89.8	89.7
Social and Behavioral WOK	83.8	81.0	82.5	82.8	82.1
Critical Thinking	92.3	83.0	86.8	81.5	78.1
Information Literacy	79.4	86.6	83.3	83.3	94.2
Cultural Diversity	89.7	88.3	88.3	85.0	89.8

Table VI-A. Enrollments in general education courses by objective, and percentage change, 2017-2022, domestic students only

OBJECTIVE	2017 enrollment	2022 enrollment	% change
#1 Written English	3,146	3,124	-0.7%
#2 Oral Communication	1,795	1,266	-29.5%
#3 Mathematics	2,409	2,886	+19.8%
#4 Fine Arts	1,484	1,388	-6.5%
#4 Foreign Languages	1,346	1,297	-3.6%
#4 Humanities	1,991	1,778	-10.7%
#5 Applied or Health Science	106	444	+318.9%
#5 Natural Science	4,123	3,428	-16.9%
#5 Natural Science lab	3,186	2,743	-13.9%
#6 Behavioral or Social Science	5,493	4,439	-19.2%
#7 Critical Thinking	1,631	1,292	-20.8%
#8 Information Literacy	1,115	1,627	+45.9%
#9 Cultural Diversity	1,848	2,322	+25.7%
Grand Total	29,673	28,034	-5.5%

Table VI-B. Enrollments in ECP and non-ECP, and percentage change, 2017 – 2022, domestic students only

OBJECTIVE	2017 ECP	2022 ECP	% change ECP	2017 non-ECP	2022 non-ECP	% change non-ECP
#1 Written English	538	708	+31.6%	2,608	2,416	-7.4%
#2 Oral Communication	227	81	-64.3%	1,568	1,185	-24.4%
#3 Mathematics	516	890	+72.5%	1,893	1,996	+5.4%
#4 Fine Arts	27	24	-11.1%	1,475	1,364	-6.4%
#4 Foreign Languages	357	471	+31.9%	989	826	-16.5%
#4 Humanities	918	957	+4.3%	1,073	821	-23.5%
#5 Applied or Health Science	0	0		106	444	318.8%
#5 Natural Science	444	469	-5.6%	3,679	2,959	-19.6%
#5 Natural Science lab	383	337	-12.0%	2,803	2,406	-14.2%
#6 Behavioral or Social Science	1,473	1,159	-21.3%	4,020	3,280	-18.4%
#7 Critical Thinking	447	318	-29.9%	1,184	974	-17.7%
#8 Information Literacy	41	492	+1100.0%	1,074	1,135	+5.7%
#9 Cultural Diversity	0	419		1,848	1,903	+3.0%

Table VI-C. Enrollments in online and non-online courses, and percentage change, 2017 – 2022.

OBJECTIVE	2017 online	2022 online	% change	2017 non-online	2022 non-online	% change
#1 Written English	336	708	+110.7%	2,810	2,416	-14.0%
#2 Oral Communication	442	534	+20.8%	1,353	732	-45.9%
#3 Mathematics	123	468	+280.5%	2,286	2,418	+5.8%
#4 Fine Arts	604	9835	+38.3%	780	553	-37.2%
#4 Foreign Languages	284	598	+110.6%	1,062	699	-34.2%
#4 Humanities	254	380	+49.6%	1,737	1,398	-19.5%
#5 Applied or Health Science	106	444	+318.9%			
#5 Natural Science	138	370	+168.1%	3,985	3,058	-23.3%
#5 Natural Science lab	49	226	+361.2%	3,137	2,517	-19.8%
#6 Behavioral or Social Science	1,557	1,712	+10.0%	3,936	2,727	-30.7%
#7 Critical Thinking	406	503	+23.9%	1,225	789	-35.6%
#8 Information Literacy	511	708	+38.6%	604	919	+52.2%
#9 Cultural Diversity	874	1,468	+68.0%	974	854	-12.3%

Table VI-D. Pass rates* of General Education courses, 2022, overall and by gender

OBJECTIVE	2022 pass rate	2022 pass rate, women	2022 pass rate, men
#1 Written English	89%	89%	87%
#2 Oral Communication	83%	85%	81%
#3 Mathematics	88%	87%	88%
#4 Fine Arts	90%	90%	88%
#4 Foreign Languages	90%	91%	89%
#4 Humanities	95%	96%	94%
#5 Applied or Health Science	89%	89%	89%
#5 Natural Science	93%	94%	93%
#5 Natural Science lab	95%	96%	94%
#6 Behavioral or Social Science	89%	90%	88%
#7 Critical Thinking	90%	91%	89%
#8 Information Literacy	94%	93%	94%
#9 Cultural Diversity	92%	92%	90%

*Grades for not passing the course are F, U, X, and NP. Students awarded a final grade of AU, I, or W are not included in this data.

Table VI-E. Pass rates of General Education courses, 2022, by race/ethnicity* †

OBJ	AI/AN	Asian	Black/AA	Hispanic/ Latino	NH/PI	NR Alien	2+	Unknown	White
#1	68% (62)	93% (28)	90% (41)	82% (454)	88% (16)	98% (62)	84% (96)	96% (112)	90% (2,072)
#2	57% (12)	91% (11)	69% (16)	81% (177)	73% (11)	82% (17)	87% (54)	80% (54)	84% (1,146)
#3	78% (36)	81% (32)	74% (23)	81% (315)	88% (8)	92% (49)	81% (75)	95% (116)	89% (1,990)
#4 FA	79% (29)	87% (15)	86% (22)	87% (190)	67% (6)	92% (36)	85% (55)	88% (26)	91% (975)
#4 For	92% (26)	87% (15)	100% (11)	91% (235)	88% (8)	86% (22)	88% (33)	97% (78)	89% (775)
#4 Hum	84% (25)	100% (40)	100% (16)	94% (160)	80% (5)	94% (16)	93% (72)	99% (99)	96% (1,294)
#5 A/HS	50% (8)	100% (2)	86% (7)	90% (62)	100% (2)	100% (7)	100% (18)	100% (8)	88% (292)
#5 NS	87% (46)	94% (54)	88% (41)	91% (436)	87% (15)	95% (61)	90% (84)	95% (107)	94% (2,455)
#5 lab	81% (31)	94% (54)	91% (35)	94% (344)	93% (15)	92% (53)	94% (69)	97% (88)	95% (1,959)
#6 SS	77% (71)	88% (60)	87% (54)	83% (604)	91% (33)	95% (105)	89% (166)	96% (165)	90% (3,062)
#7 CT	83% (18)	96% (26)	83% (12)	87% (134)	100% (5)	95% (19)	91% (46)	95% (42)	90% (918)
#8 IL	74% (34)	94% (35)	96% (27)	93% (213)	100% (6)	100% (26)	91% (55)	99% (92)	94% (1,076)
#9 CD	81% (42)	98% (47)	93% (27)	90% (337)	92% (12)	95% (42)	94% (86)	93% (105)	92% (1,436)

*Column title abbreviations: AI/AN = American Indian/Alaskan Native; AA = African American; NH/PI = Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; NR Alien = non-resident alien; 2+ = two or more races; White = White/Non-Hispanic

† Grades for not passing the course are F, U, X, and NP. Students awarded a final grade of AU, I, or W are not included in this data. Sample sizes are shown in parentheses below the percentages in each cell of the table.

Table VIII-A. Percent of course sections taught by full-time and part-time faculty (without ECP)

OBJECTIVE	2017 Full-time	2022 Full-time	2017 Part-time	2022 Part-time
#1 Written English	27%	22%	73%	78%
#2 Oral Communication	33%	21%	67%	79%
#3 Mathematics	66%	46%	34%	54%
#4 Fine Arts	33%	51%	67%	49%
#4 Foreign Languages	36%	20%	64%	80%
#4 Humanities	56%	44%	44%	56%
#5 Applied or Health Science	67%	85%	33%	15%
#5 Natural Science	64%	55%	36%	45%
#5 Natural Science lab	28%	45%	72%	55%
#6 Behavioral or Social Science	53%	39%	47%	61%
#7 Critical Thinking	63%	45%	37%	55%
#8 Information Literacy	37%	51%	63%	49%
#9 Cultural Diversity	48%	47%	52%	53%

Table VIII-B. Percent of course sections taught by tenure status of faculty (without ECP)

OBJECTIVE	2017 non-TT*	2022 non-TT	2017 TT**	2022 TT
#1 Written English	98%	90%	2%	10%
#2 Oral Communication	96%	97%	4%	3%
#3 Mathematics	85%	89%	15%	11%
#4 Fine Arts	89%	84%	11%	16%
#4 Foreign Languages	99%	100%	1%	0%
#4 Humanities	90%	81%	10%	19%
#5 Applied or Health Science	0%	100%	100%	0%
#5 Natural Science	84%	78%	16%	22%
#5 Natural Science lab	97%	97%	3%	3%
#6 Behavioral or Social Science	84%	60%	16%	40%
#7 Critical Thinking	70%	76%	30%	24%
#8 Information Literacy	74%	66%	26%	44%
#9 Cultural Diversity	63%	72%	37%	28%

*non-tenure track

**tenure track or tenured

APPENDIX X. SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

-Students

- More courses are now offered online, with some Associate Degrees online, and a variety of modes of delivery
- High pass rates in Gen Ed courses, aiding retention, and little difference in pass rates by gender
- More students are meeting expectations of Gen Ed competencies as “closing the loop” improves student outcomes over time
- Coursework outside major department provides balance and awareness of issues outside discipline
- Wide variety of courses to choose from in Objectives 3-9
- Gen Ed courses provide valuable prerequisite skills and knowledge to prepare students for major programs (e.g., health professions)
- Gen Ed courses that use OER increase affordability
- ECP general education courses increase accessibility and affordability
- Transfer of courses has been made easier over time

-Faculty

- Office of Assessment supports GERC and General Education; ITRC (Quality+ program and course design) and PIE provide resources as well
- Nearly all Gen Ed courses have assessment plans
- GERC Annual Reports provides feedback to instructors and inspires conversations about general education among faculty; focus on overall success of General Education program
- General Education objectives and competencies are reviewed on a regular basis and the first full cycle is nearly completed

Weaknesses

-Students

- Many general education courses are not offered in person on Idaho Falls campus, and there are limited options based on location
- Limited access for students in some specific areas (e.g., lab courses)
- Expertise of teaching online for labs needs improvement
- Declining enrollment in nearly all face-to-face courses
- Challenges with ECP courses include grade inflation, ensuring rigor, communication problems

-Faculty

- Teaching expertise doesn't always factor what is best pedagogically in terms of if/how to offer courses online
- Need more incentives for Quality Matters
- Need better communication with students as to why General Education is important, and with faculty as well
- Uncertainty about future of LMS program and planning for courses
- Operating in silos within the Gen Ed program
- GERC member turnover has led to inconsistent feedback to faculty regarding assessment plans and annual reports
- Gen Ed faculty need greater understanding of learning outcomes and assessment
- Lack of support/recognition for serving on GERC and failure to recognize it as service

Opportunities

-Students

- Online offerings serve students in other parts of Idaho and the US, in addition to local students
- Revisit scheduling of General Education courses to better meet students' needs
- Consider certificate of completion for General Education program to better serve transfer students
- Improve communication with ECP instructors to increase support for them, gather better assessment data, improve rigor, and increase enrollment
- Increase access to regular sections of college courses for high school students
- Strength connection between the General Education program and University mission, vision, and values, and reinforce the Bengal identity/community across campus, not just within majors, as General Education is the one part of the curriculum that all undergraduates share
- Increase MOUs for 2+2 program to enable smooth transition for students
- Change perception that General Education is not really necessary; it is the foundation for all later coursework, particularly in demand skills such as communication
- Marketing to set our Gen Ed courses apart from less expensive ones at other institutions

-Faculty

- GERC can improve processes and procedures to make assessment more manageable and improve faculty understanding of learning outcomes and assessment
- Recognize faculty for excellence in teaching General Education courses and their service in assessment; service on GERC may be path to leadership for some
- Increase alternative/authentic assessments, particularly in response to AI
- Increase collaboration across departments

- Use LMS data to streamline assessment

-Other-

- Use GERC assessment data as evidence of skill mastery for other stakeholders

Threats

-Students

- Increasing tuition rates
- General lack of respect for higher education by the public
- Artificial Intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT)
- Need better quality control of ECP

-Faculty

- Switch to Canvas may result in reduced capabilities in gathering data for assessment
- Declining enrollments
- Students taking Gen Ed courses at other institutions (outsourcing), especially in light of cost differentials of four-year schools vs community colleges
- Perception that Gen Ed courses are not really necessary