

GE New Themes Committee Final Report

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Submitted by Committee Members

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Introduction

The Subcommittee on New Themes (formerly Open Themes) began meeting in October 2019 and concluded its work on January 29, 2020 guided by the charge to devise a process to establish and ensure regular assessment of existing themes and what process needs to be established to develop new themes.

What follows is the results of the committee's design of a process for reviewing new themes for submission to the GE and re-design based on feedback we received from a university wide feedback process as part of the GE Implementation Committee's website. We submitted an initial proposal to the campus community on November 11, 2019 and received university-wide feedback for two weeks concluding Nov. 27, 2019, on the proposed process for accepting and reviewing New Theme proposals. Feedback was shared online via the Questions and Comments form and via email to Wendy Smooth, chair of the Open Themes Subcommittee.

The university wide feedback overwhelmingly stated that the original proposal to have New Themes in place prior to colleges casting their votes to approve the GE was too compressed and did not allow faculty time to adequately devise their new theme proposals. Second, the timeline coincided with the semester winter break which would further inhibit collaborations on the scale necessary to produce interdisciplinary partnerships as suggested by the new GE plan. In addition, the committee received feedback on the number of courses necessary to submit an initial proposal and to have the proposal move through the process.

This revised plan as submitted below represents the New Themes' Subcommittee's proposed plan for submitting New Themes as well as a proposed university-wide body of faculty and students to review new themes. The proposal process is guided by three main goals that became critically clear as cornerstones of a successful process- **transparency, maximizing participation, and building an accessible process**. We have designed a process for submitting new themes that is open to the university community, allows for the co-creation of themes by the widest groups possible, builds multiple opportunities for the university community to join in the creation of new themes and does so in a manner that opens the process rather than limits it to participation by a select few. This process, if followed as articulated here will initiate a process that is inclusive and holds to the values we articulate.

The process we propose will take approximately 7 months to achieve maximum participation. The New Themes Subcommittee has not suggested, nor do we favor imposing a fixed number of New Themes for the roll out of the GE. Instead, we encourage a process that is as inclusive as possible and encourages and fosters collaboration among units to develop new themes that adequately represent what the faculty determines is necessary for students to deliver a sound curriculum.

Goals and Learning Outcomes for the Educated Global Citizen. The Ohio State University's general education program enables students to acquire and develop a breadth of awareness, knowledge and skills that cross disciplinary boundaries and extend to areas outside specialized study programs.

General Education is designed to develop and refine certain qualities, abilities and characteristics that prepare its students to be engaged, resilient, and adaptable citizens and leaders for life; to develop an engagement with and an ability to apply a range of important modes of human thought and inquiry; and to examine significant aspects of the human condition in local, state, national and global settings today, and in the foreseeable future.

The GE program is designed around themes. Over the course of the new GE design process, four themes emerged each informed to meet a broad set of learning objectives for OSU students. The existing GEs are broad, interdisciplinary, respond to questions and concerns reflecting the 21st century context informing it from historical, present and futuristic approaches.

Citizenship for Just and Diverse World

All students will complete the "Citizenship" theme – consisting of the foundation course on Racial, Ethnic and Gender Diversity, plus 2 additional courses. "Education for Citizenship" is the University's motto, and the new mission statement indicates that the University is dedicated to "preparing a diverse student body to be leaders and engaged citizens."

Sustainability

Students understand how human and natural systems interact, how human well-being depends on these interactions, gain motivation to engage in potential solutions, and stewardship of resources.

Health and Wellbeing

Students understand health and wellbeing from a variety of perspectives inclusive of causes of disease, disease prevention, optimum wellness, community health, and health systems. Students can discern health systems and organizations and understand the physical, mental, cultural, social, career and financial aspects of personal health and wellbeing.

Lived Environments (Previously called "Places & Spaces")

Students understand issues related to humans and their lived environments through both objective and subjective lenses inclusive of physical, biological, cultural and aesthetic space that individuals occupy, and the relationship between humans and their environments

Call for New Themes

While these themes all address broad ideas, these themes are not representative of all ways of enlisting thought on substantial questions, ideas, and concepts that do and should shape and prepare students to thrive as citizens educated for a just and diverse world. Therefore, during the GE implementation process, we are soliciting faculty to submit additional themes that are sufficiently different from those listed above and reflect the broad engagements with the 21st c. context. Further, proposed New Themes must meet the following criteria:

We seek proposals of new themes that:

- Respond to big questions and reflect relevance to 21st century contexts inclusive of historical, present and futuristic approaches.
- Address questions from multiple disciplinary locations and are broadly engaging
- Reflect significant difference from the existing themes

We anticipate issuing Calls for New GE Themes on a regular basis following this initial proposal call.

New Themes Timeline & Review Process (11.27.19)(12.11.19)

The process for accepting New Themes begins with introducing the process to the university community and allowing a space for face- to- face networking and a virtual space for networking. We propose this process begin with a minimum of three Information Sharing and Networking sessions including one student-centered session where students are able to shape ideas for New Themes which would later move to faculty groups working on similar or related topics.

Information Sharing & Networking Session (1 faculty session)

Information Sharing & Networking Sessions (1 faculty & 1 student session)

Themes Commons- university-wide online discussion page to connect potential collaborators and circulate early ideas

Two Month Timeframe

At the time of the initial call, the university community will have an opportunity to view all proposals that are submitted via the official online portal. In addition, those with ideas for proposals that are still taking shape and are searching for partners and collaborators will have an opportunity to via the Themes Commons to deliberate with colleagues and shape ideas for later submission via the official submission portal. We strongly underscore the incentive for submitters to propose their ideas early in the process to maximize feedback and utilize the opportunities to identify collaborators.

Call for New Theme Proposals

Faculty members will submit proposals to the OAA website and once submitted the proposal will be available campus-wide for viewing.

Proposals will need to include all the elements required for first round submissions.

Proposals Must Include:

-Title and theme statement: Title for the Theme as well as a 1-2 sentence abstract.

-Primary contact person: Name, title, department and contact information

-Overview Narrative: Discuss the goals and purpose of the proposed theme, how it contributes to the values stated above and how it sufficiently differs from the existing themes. Proposals must address how the new theme reflects the

GE's ELOs, Theme ELOs and include at minimum one preliminary specialized ELO related specifically to the new theme. (2-3 pages)

-Curricular participation: Identify a minimum of 5 courses that will be included in the theme, stemming from a minimum of three departments or other academic programs. Preference beyond the initial stage will be given to proposals that reach a significant number and wide variety of students; a minimum of 12 courses will be required. Courses at the 2000 level or above are available for inclusion in the themes.

-Endorsements: Proposals require the endorsement from at least three participating departments or academic programs signifying that they are committed to offering the courses on a regular basis.

-Strong preference will be given to proposed themes that include a breadth of disciplines and maximize participation by including involvement from multiple departments, academic programs and/or colleges.

-Similarly, preference will be given to proposed themes that are accessible to achieve by students on the regional campuses.

This is the opportunity for new proposal submissions. No New Themes submissions will be accepted after the close of this period.

One Month Timeframe

University-Wide Community Review

During this period, we encourage the overall university community to visit the site and view what colleagues are proposing as New Themes. This is also a time to foster connections, build potential collaborations, and reach out to fellow proposers who have ideas that are similar to your own. If you have courses or ideas on how to enrich the proposed themes, this is an opportunity to interact with those who have offered proposals to strengthen the posted proposals. This stage is designed to maximize transparency, share university-wide thinking on potential New Themes, as well as maximize interdisciplinary collaboration across departments and colleges. Those who have submitted proposals during the open call for proposals are invited to take the comments, offers for collaboration and other feedback to make their proposals stronger. Proposal submitters will have an opportunity to revise, combine or merge proposals. Submitters will have the opportunity to resubmit their proposals following the University Wide Community Review process. We encourage submitters to monitor their proposals for feedback throughout this period.

No new proposals will be accepted after the deadline associated with this phase.

Concurrently, colleges may choose to participate in the review process pursuant to appropriate rules.

+One Month Timeframe

Revisions Period Based on University –Wide Community Feedback

During this one month period following the close of the University-Wide Community Review process, proposal submitters will have an opportunity to revise and resubmit their proposals. During this process, proposal submitters seeking to move forward in the review process must articulate how their proposals are sufficiently different from the existing four themes using the theme-specific ELOs that will be available to the university community.

Following this phase, revised proposals will move forward to the University New Themes Review Committee for assessment and evaluation for Round 1 assessment and evaluation.

+One Month Timeframe

University New Themes Review Committee- Round 1

The University New Themes Review Committee will review final submissions for Round 1. The committee will review proposals for their overall quality and alignment based on required elements and how well the proposed New Themes differ from the four existing themes. Proposals submitters should be aware that they may be asked to merge with similar proposals. Some proposals will be invited/selected to advance to Round 2.

+One Month Timeframe

Revisions Based on Feedback from the Review Committee

Advancing proposals will have an opportunity to make revisions based upon the University New Themes Review Committee’s recommended revisions. At this stage, proposed themes will be required to provide new formal endorsements from participating departments- demonstrating the regularity of the course offerings. Preference will be given to proposals that reach a significant number and wide variety of students; a minimum of 12 courses will be required.

+One Month Timeframe

University New Themes Review Committee – Round 2

The University New Themes Review Committee will review the newly revised proposals and will make the final selection of New Themes.

Announcement of New Themes and Feedback

New Themes will be announced. Those proposals that were not selected for the initial roll out of New Themes will be provided feedback, which can be used to re-submit themes in subsequent New Theme open calls for proposals.

This results in an overall 7 month process from opening the call for new theme proposals through the announcement of new themes.

New Theme Review Committee

Except where noted, committee members will be appointed by their college curriculum committees in consultation with their college curriculum deans to assure the selection of committee members with expertise in curriculum issues.

Chair -ASC faculty member appointed by ASC Dean serving as a voting member

2 Regional campus faculty member-Could also be ASC, but not named as such. Selected by Executive Dean for the Regional campuses in consultation with the regional campus associate deans

3 Arts and sciences faculty members (1 per division)

1 Fisher College of Business faculty member

1 Engineering faculty member

1 Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences faculty member

1 Education and Human Ecology faculty member

1 John Glenn College of Public Affairs faculty member

1 Social Work faculty member

1 faculty member from the Health Sciences colleges

3 Undergraduate student representatives – Selected by the USG as the representative body

The committee structure allows for the possibility of dividing the workload across three subcommittees to review proposals.