

Review of Three General Education Program Proposals | Fall 2025

Submitted by AUH Feasibility Committee:

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Comparison of General Education Proposals

Content	Dukes Engage	Preparing for Unexpected Futures	Build Your Madison Experience
Total Credits	42 (higher than current)	30 (lowest of the three)	37 (moderate)
Science Requirement	Reduced from 7 → 3 credits, no lab	Reduced from 7 → 3 credits, no lab	Reduced from 7 → 4 credits, lab retained
Capstone	"Enlightened Citizens" culminating course	Global challenges / ethics capstone	"Madison Moment" integrative capstone
Flexibility	Moderate: structure resembles current, with more double-counting	High: smaller footprint allows minors, electives, dual majors	High: multiple pathways, but may overwhelm students
Alignment to Mission	Tied to university mission and liberal arts tradition	Bold and future-focused, emphasizes adaptability	Integrates Gen Ed and majors; reinforces holistic outcomes
Strengths	Strong liberal arts identity Expanded wellness focus Clear alignment with mission	Visionary, future-oriented design Opens space for minors/majors Emphasizes adaptability	A balanced approach that keeps current strengths

1. Dukes Engage

Curricular Vision and Impact/ Alignment

- Liberal arts foundation remains central.
- "Enlightened Citizens" capstone may be tough to market to students.
- Extra flexibility benefits students and departments.
- Close resemblance to current structure eases transition.
- Reduction in science labs raises STEM concerns.
- Program requires one additional credit, leaving students slightly less room to maneuver.
- Broader approach to wellness is welcomed.
- Teaching outside of faculty expertise may create integrity issues.
- Awarding credit for "college readiness" is debatable.
- Lab experience removed (7 → 3 credits).
- Capstone could overlap with disciplinary versions and demand extra resources.
- Clear connection to JMU's mission and image.

Budget & Resources/ Scalability and Function

- 42 credits may constrain minors or double majors.
- Heavy reliance on small sections could be unsustainable.
- Summer training and cross-disciplinary courses require time and funding.
- Dropping labs frees teaching staff, but reduces student experience.
- Capstone projects are costly across the board.
- Staffing 24-student “Dukes Discover” courses would be difficult.
- Asking faculty to work summers is expensive and unpopular.
- Model may not scale to JMU’s size.

Operations & Support/ Support System

- Creation of new courses in thematic pillars required.
- Additional faculty or hires likely needed.
- Complex pillar subdivisions may confuse students.
- First-year requirement of 9–12 credits problematic for transfers.
- Like the current model, First-year students may find it difficult to meet the requirements.
- Large representative council increases service commitments.
- Advising and administrative workload would rise significantly.
- Hybrid design (part online, part in-person) could appeal, but less-prepared students may struggle.

Note: Expanded wellness options are a strength. Missing element: structured AI literacy.

2. Preparing for Unexpected Futures

Curricular Vision and Impact/ Alignment

- Structure not dramatically reimagined, still rooted in liberal arts.
- 30-credit load leaves room for minors and electives.
- Lower requirements could disadvantage some departments.
- “Versatility Rays” framework ambitious but potentially confusing.
- References to systems and science feel thin.
- Vision is forward-looking, geared toward adaptability.
- Lab experience eliminated (7 → 3 credits).
- Capstone on global challenges may clash with disciplinary capstones.

Budget & Resources/ Scalability and Function

- Small credit footprint creates flexibility but unpredictable effects.
- Senior capstone would strain large majors.
- Requires significant faculty collaboration, development, and new courses.
- Capstone projects are costly across the board.
- Increased demand on CFI and Libraries, both already stretched.
- External partnerships would need funding.
- Redistribution of credits may leave some departments under pressure.

Operations & Support/ Support System

- Rays model may confuse both faculty and students.
- Advising needs would grow considerably.
- Capstone may conflict with Honors projects and other capstones.
- Unclear how interdisciplinary credentialing would work.
- “Assignment kitchen” modules would require ongoing oversight.
- Course demand becomes less predictable, creating strain.

Note: Sciences appear largely absent in this design. Strong thematic vision, but system strain is likely.

3. Build Your Madison Experience

Curricular Vision and Impact/ Alignment

- 37-credit integrated design.
- “Madison Moment” capstone could face low student enthusiasm.
- Flexibility risks reducing interdisciplinarity.
- Cohesion uncertain if departments pursue separate objectives.
- Emphasizes connection between Gen Ed and majors.
- Science reduced from 7 → 4 credits, still keeping lab element.
- Optional pathways may narrow liberal arts breadth.
- Only one Gen Ed course can count towards your major, which may cause a significant limitation for some departments.

Budget & Resources/ Scalability and Function

- Departments may need more faculty if contributing new courses.
- Integrated design requires extensive training.
- Capstone could burden upper-division courses.
- Re-evaluating transfer credits creates administrative challenges.
- Lab requirement sustains equipment use but is costly.
- GE scrapbook and Madison Moment may require extra funding.

Operations & Support/ Support System

- Faculty training and oversight needs are high.
- Governance requires new committees, adding service load.
- Reviewing courses and outcomes would be intensive.
- Ambiguity in goals may frustrate departments.
- Nine first-year credits are challenging for transfers.
- Oversight of integrative courses is unclear.
- Advising and logistics could become strained.

Note: Probably the easiest to implement, since many existing courses can remain while new options are added.

Additional Questions, Comments, and Suggestions

- What issue are we really trying to address with this revision?
- Are we overlooking essential areas such as AI literacy and wellness?
- Faculty and staffing resources are relatively fixed—how do new demands fit?
- All proposals add capstones; concrete examples would help faculty visualize.
- A hybrid model combining the strongest elements may be best.
- Comparative tables (including the current program) would make differences clearer.
- AP, dual-enrollment, and transfer credit policies remain vague.
- Cross-department work adds a heavy governance load.
- General Education courses at the 200 or 300 level offered within units or colleges.
- Consideration of Gen Ed Name change (for example, Madison Core Curriculum)