Preparation for Unexpected Futures: A Reimagined General Education Program

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Executive Summary

Vision

By 2035, JMU will be a nationally recognized leader for changing the traditional narrative about General Education. Under this proposal, *JMU will prepare its graduates for both expected and unexpected futures*. As higher education faces increased scrutiny and skepticism, JMU will inspire the broader culture to again embrace learning beyond each student's expected personal and professional path as embodied by their majors and minors. At JMU, the timeless general insights of the Arts, Letters, and Sciences will be rediscovered as its faculty challenge students to identify, imagine, and interpret how those fields might impact them personally and professionally in unexpected futures. As a result, General Education will increasingly be valued by students, families, and the Commonwealth of Virginia as its purpose and power is seen (again) through JMU alumni who are distinguished by literacy and versatility—the ability to adapt their knowledge and skills to engage those unexpected futures.

Proposal

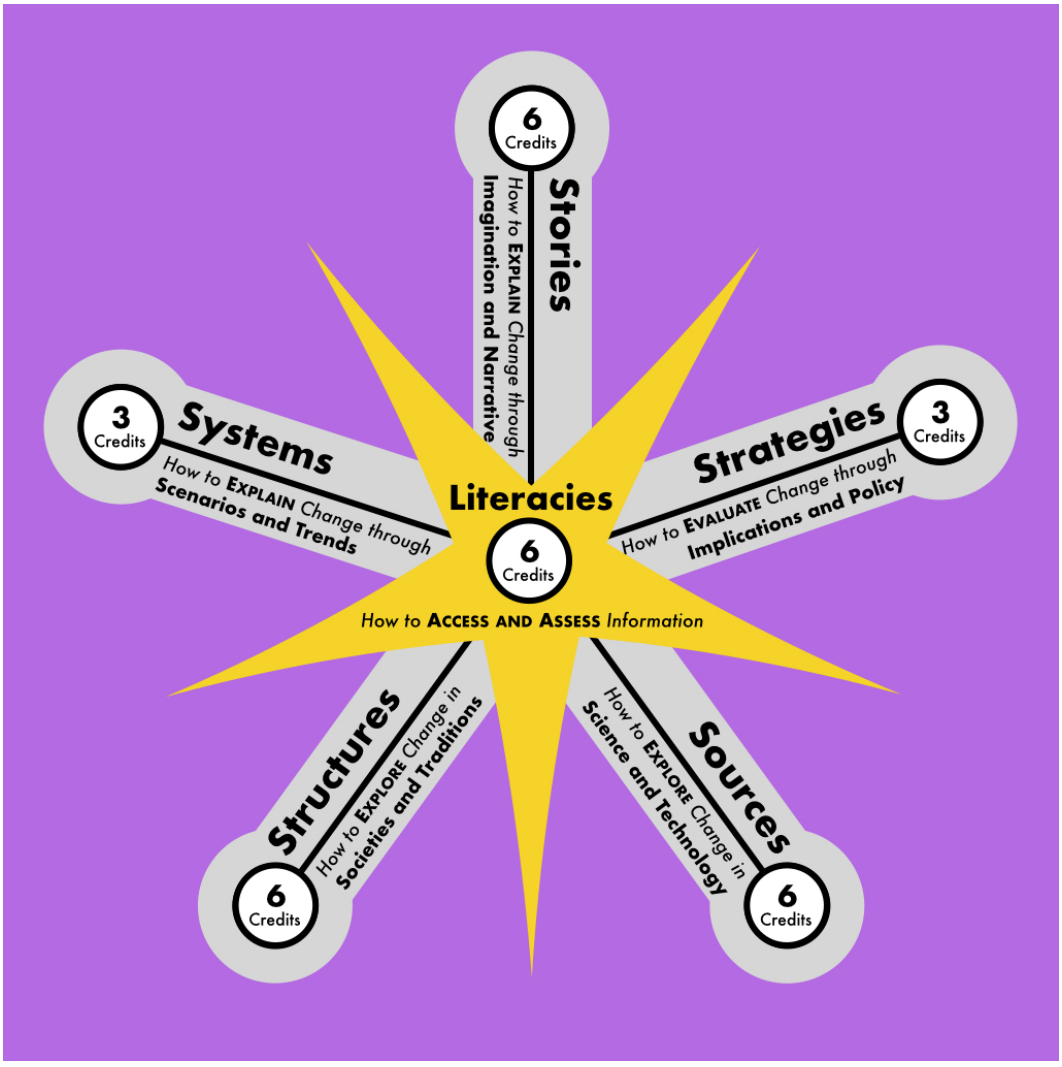
Public trust in higher education has been eroding for decades due to concerns about its increasing cost, perceived politicization, and alleged lack of relevance, with a potential moment forthcoming when others will ultimately decide its fate. But rather than lean into these trends and transform universities fully into pre-professional preparation, this proposal imagines a new "framing" of the purpose and power of the traditional Arts, Letters, and Sciences and inspires the broader culture to "rediscover" the significance of General Education. What is the value of learning beyond one's major, minor, and expected personal and professional future? It is simple: being prepared for everything

else…the unexpected futures. As graduates change jobs, fields, and life circumstances multiple times during their lives, it is a general education that provides the literacy and versatility to remain relevant regardless of what alumni face. They can adapt the knowledge and skills of their majors/minors to whatever surprising challenges emerge.

To develop this kind of graduate, this 30-credit model consists of one Literacy "Core" and five emerging Versatility "Rays":

Literacy "Core" (6 Credits): One first-year (introductory) and one fourth year (culminating, capstone) course on how to access and assess information from different types of sources.

Versatility "Rays" (24 Credits): Courses will explore change in (1) Science & Technology (6 credits) and (2) Societies & Traditions (6 credits); explain change through (3) Scenarios & Trends (3 credits) and (4) Imagination & Narrative (6 credits); and evaluate change through (5) Implications & Policy (3 credits).



With this proposal, General Education will expose students to the foundational wisdom of classic academic disciplines, but within a new overarching narrative that transcends these boundaries and focuses on helping students develop versatility beyond the skills of majors and minors. Students will learn to explore, explain, and evaluate change in the many unexpected futures where each of these disciplines impacts their futures in potential ways they do not imagine…yet.

This proposal further solidifies JMU's signature commitment to an energetic and engaged undergraduate education, but also makes General Education no longer seem peripheral, but definitive of JMU graduates: literate and versatile citizens who adapt to lead productive and meaningful lives even in unexpected futures.

Preparation for Unexpected Futures: A Reimagined General Education Program

Purpose of General Education

By 2035, JMU will be a nationally recognized leader for *changing the narrative about the purpose and power of General Education*. Embodying a new model that enhances literacy and versatility for the entirety of a graduate's personal and professional future, JMU will demonstrate the value of investing in educational resources beyond majors, minors, and *expected* life opportunities. JMU and its alumni will be known for their ability to adapt knowledge and skills to engage with *unexpected futures*.

Public confidence in higher education continues to decline due to concerns about perceived politicization/indoctrination, lack of relevance, and excessive cost. General Education programs are uniquely vulnerable to skepticism, for their coursework lies outside of incoming students' majors, minors, and expected life goals (Ritter, 2025). As such, an increasing number of students are seeking to fulfill (or avoid) these requirements through AP courses, dual enrollment, transfer credit, or simply disengaging from the coursework. While many educators remain convinced of its value, the public is no longer willing to take our word for it. Traditional programs, or at least our explanation of them, simply do not work anymore. Higher education must change.

A tempting response might be to simply "lean in" to a vision of higher education as a mere career pathway. Universities could reform General Education by transforming courses into "tracks" for different preprofessional programs, decentralize coursework into individual departments, or even eliminate General Education altogether. However, all of these would be mistakes. While it is understandable that students, families, and government leaders focus on coursework devoted to graduates' intended professional futures, *JMU prepares its graduates for both expected and unexpected futures*.

Both personally and professionally, young people face far greater uncertainty and future change than is often acknowledged. For example, researchers estimate that within 10 years of graduating from college, the average young person has held 4.5 jobs, and that fewer than 30% are still working in the

field of their chosen major (Burning Glass Institute, 2024; LinkedIn, 2025). More broadly, society evolves in its priorities in response to new political, economic, social, and technological challenges (Inglehart, 2020). These changes can be dramatic, abrupt, and have significant consequences for all professional fields. However, none of this should affect the value of a JMU education, specifically because it is designed to be *general*: relevant to every possible future scenario. *This* is the purpose of General Education: to challenge students to *learn what they do not think they need to learn* so that they are **prepared for unexpected futures**.

Definition and Purpose

General Education at JMU is a shared academic foundation, designed to equip every student with the mindsets, literacies, and ethical capacities needed to navigate an uncertain future. Moving beyond a major-focused curricula, it is where students learn *how* to think—critically, creatively, and responsibly—using information across disciplines.

Beyond Coursework

Because life is uncertain, General Education fosters lifelong adaptability and critical agency through skills that endure beyond graduation: not just research and reasoning, but digital, data, media, and ethical literacies. Our program cultivates graduates who thrive in their careers, lead their communities, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Distinctiveness

JMU's General Education program will be systematically built around a comprehensive, compelling, and timely narrative of increasing future versatility and literacy. Students will complement the learning in their majors and minors (often tied to what they expect their future to look like) with enduring insights from the traditional Arts, Letters, and Sciences, a combination that prepares them to explore and explain change and thereby be better prepared for unexpected futures. At JMU, General Education goes beyond what every student needs to know for their future to help them see why they need to know it.

General Education courses will inspire students with a vision of how ideologies, cultural traditions, and societal frameworks as well as scientific developments, new technologies, and the natural world might change and thereby impact their personal and professional futures in unexpected ways. Students will explore the most critical concepts from the disciplines to understand those potential changes and be better prepared to engage them regardless of what course their personal or professional lives take. Students will develop their own potential insights by learning how to engage in

critical, creative, and evaluative thinking about those changes. This makes the timeless value of traditional learning "new" by showing what it can teach us about unexpected futures.

JMU's General Education program aspires to truly live up to its name of being "general" (i.e., universally applicable) and therefore as relevant as anything in higher education. That is why JMU will be a leader in changing the narrative, ultimately improving the public's perception of the purpose and power of General Education.

Evolution: Shared Foundations and Meaningful Shifts

The proposed General Education program represents a meaningful evolution—one that builds on the strong foundation of JMU's existing model while reimagining what General Education can look like in a rapidly changing world. It does not reject the current framework but reorients it around a new vision: preparing students not only for success in their careers, but for adaptability, ethical engagement, and informed action in the face of uncertainty. What follows is a synthesis of both continuity and change—highlighting how the new model retains JMU's long-held values while introducing significant innovations in structure, purpose, and student experience.

What Remains the Same

The proposed model builds on JMU's strong tradition of liberal arts education. In the new program, students investigate the human experience through lenses of past and present, while also developing capabilities to navigate many possible human futures. Moving beyond only content coverage or passive survey-style courses, the new model embraces active learning strategies and other dynamic pedagogies in both existing and newly developed courses to highlight exploration, explanation, and ethical responses to change. Driving the proposal is the underlying question of how students can be prepared for uncertain futures, not only in terms of career success, but also in their overall adaptability, ethical engagement, and informed action as they face a world defined by complexity, volatility, and rapid change.

1. Breadth, Integration, and Interdisciplinary Exposure

At their core, both programs are rooted in the belief that a college education should reach beyond the major. Whether through the current five areas or the proposed Versatility Core, students engage with multiple disciplines, ways of knowing, and intellectual traditions. Both models value the integration of ideas across domains, encouraging students to connect scientific reasoning, artistic expression, social inquiry, and historical understanding in ways that enrich their academic and personal growth.

2. Foundational Literacies and Core Competencies

Both programs emphasize literacies as essential tools, training students how to ask questions, interpret evidence, and communicate effectively in diverse contexts.

3. Civic and Ethical Development

JMU has long prioritized preparing students for civic life and ethical responsibility. The current program makes this visible in its emphasis on informed citizenship and ethical reasoning. The proposed model builds on this foundation, infusing global citizenship and ethical foresight throughout the curriculum by including experts from Ethical Reasoning in Action and the Center for Civic Engagement. Despite differences in design, both models reflect a commitment to educating students who can think beyond themselves and contribute responsibly to their communities and professions.

4. Lifelong Learning and Transferable Skills

Both programs aim to develop habits of mind that extend far beyond graduation. Skills such as inquiry, adaptability, information literacy, and problem-solving appear throughout both models. While the new proposal places more focus on preparing students for futures they can't yet anticipate, the current model shares its commitment to flexible thinking and intellectual resilience. In both approaches, students are invited to grow as learners, citizens, and collaborators.

5. A Shared Academic Identity

Both programs define what it means to be a graduate of James Madison University. Each model ensures that all students, regardless of major, encounter a common set of values and academic experiences that reflect the university's mission to foster ethical, engaged, and critically minded individuals.

What's New

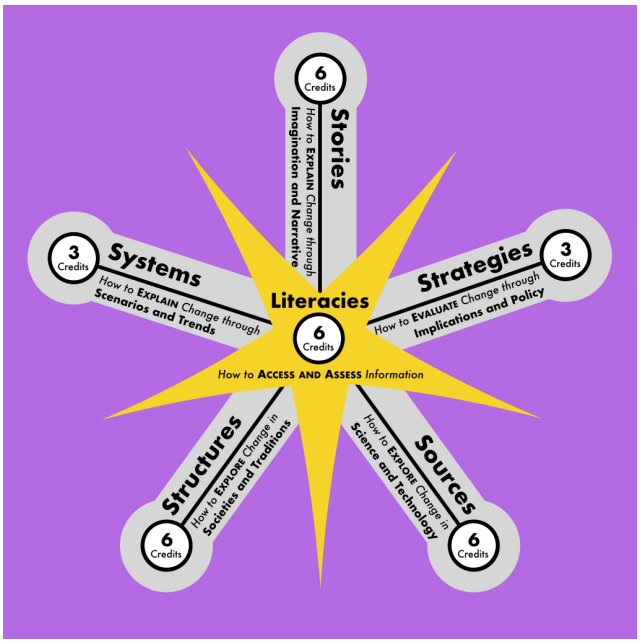
The proposed General Education program represents a significant shift in vision, structure, and purpose—marking a clear evolution from the current model. While the existing program has served JMU well, the new proposal is designed to meet the needs of students entering a world defined by complexity, volatility, and rapid change.

1. Pathway through the Program

Throughout, a consistent focus on **Essential Literacies** (6 credits) unites the curriculum around a coherent academic experience. A required 3-credit Information Literacy course, completed in students' first year, paves the way for developing more complex and evolving literacies, which are embedded into every course in the General Education program. During the senior year, a 3-credit capstone course encourages meaningful reflection and synthesis of the literacies with other learning outcomes.

Five **Versatility Rays** (24 credits) highlight the human experience, with an emphasis on versatility across time and contexts. The first component, ideally completed in students' first year, provides foundational knowledge and rhetorical awareness necessary for critically **exploring change**. The second component builds on this groundwork by challenging students to apply knowledge toward clearly **explaining and evaluating change.**

The lean 30-credit structure allows for strong foundations to be accomplished in the first year; it also manages to lay the groundwork for literacies to be integrated throughout the entire time at JMU.



Updated learning outcomes that are broad and transdisciplinary mean that key competencies can be established through integrated courses, rather than relying solely on disciplinary content.

Below is a description of the Essential Literacies Core and the two main components of the Versatility Rays, including SACSCOC accreditation requirement information, and a list of potential departmental contributors (which is intended to be generative rather than exhaustive).

Essential Literacies Core (6 credits)

A. **Information Literacy and Inquiry** (3 credits): All students would be required to take this course in their first year at JMU. In this course, students will be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information from a variety of sources, while understanding the social, ethical, and economic issues surrounding information access and use. Course themes could include "Navigating the Digital News Landscape," "Fact vs. Fiction in the Information Age."

Departments**:** All departments, including SCOM, SMAD, WRTC, Marketing, English, and Libraries.

After completing this course, students should be able to develop skills to evaluate and synthesize information across formats, understand the significance of research strategies and academic integrity, and cultivate critical thinking and ethical awareness in a rapidly evolving information landscape.

B. **Capstone: Navigating Scenarios of Change** (3 credits): All students would complete this experience toward the end of their undergraduate career at JMU. The experience would provide students with a formal opportunity to integrate and apply learning across domains and practice collaborative problem-solving, scenario development, and strategic thinking.

Departments: All departments, including JMU Libraries.

After completing the capstone experience, students should be able to apply General Education learning to address complex global challenges, engage in ethical reflection and decision-making, and foster interdisciplinary teamwork and strategic foresight.

Versatility Rays (24 credits)

I. **Exploring Change** (12 Credits)

A. **Society, Tradition, and Meaning** (6 credits): Courses explore enduring human concerns from the perspective of how knowledge, cultural traditions, and other societal frameworks continue to evolve and shape communities.

SACSCOC integration: Meets Humanities/Fine Arts & Social/Behavioral Science requirements.

Departments: Anthropology, Communication Studies, Economics, History, Philosophy & Religion, Political Science, Sociology, WRTC, Theatre & Dance, Art & Art History.

After completing these courses, students should be able to explore the development of human ideologies and cultural traditions, understand how economic and social systems affect communities, and develop critical skills for navigating global conflict and change.

B. **Science, Technology, and the Natural World** (6 credits): Courses explore enduring human concerns from the perspective of how scientific developments, emerging technologies, and shifts in the natural world impact human communities.

SACSCOC integration: Meets Natural Sciences/Mathematics requirements.

Departments: Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geography, Health Sciences, ISAT, Math, Physics, Psychology

After completing these courses, students should be able to analyze how science and technology influence the natural world, understand the ethical and societal implications of emerging technologies, and develop critical thinking skills about future technological and environmental challenges.

II. **Explaining Change** (9 Credits)

A. **Systems of Change** (3 credits): Courses teach critical thinking as a means of explaining change, with emphasis on interpreting data and using systems thinking and other methods to identify patterns, forecast outcomes, and analyze uncertainty.

SACSCOC integration**:** Meets Humanities/Fine Arts & Social/Behavioral Science requirements.

Departments: Business, Computer Science, Mathematics/Statistics, Physics, IA, ISAT, Philosophy.

After completing these courses, students should be able to develop analytical skills to understand and forecast complex systems and use predictive tools to make ethical decisions.

B. **Stories of Change** (6 credits): Courses teach creative and rhetorical thinking as a means of explaining change, with emphasis on how narratives and artifacts represent human communities and shape cultural imagination.

SACSCOC integration: Meets Humanities/Fine Arts requirements.

Departments: Art, Art History, Communication Studies, Dance, Music, English, SMAD, Theatre, WRTC.

After completing these courses, students should be able to understand the role of narratives in shaping cultural imagination, enhance creative, interpretive, and empathetic skills, and engage with the ethical implications of emerging narratives.

III. **Evaluating Change** (3 credits): Courses teach problem-solving and other active learning strategies to assess impacts of sweeping technological, political, and economic changes.

SACSCOC integration: Meets Humanities/Fine Arts & Social/Behavioral Science requirements.

Departments: Business, Environmental Studies, Health Sciences, Justice Studies, Philosophy, Political Science.

After completing these courses, students should be able to analyze the social, economic, and political impacts of change, develop creative problem-solving and strategic thinking skills, and use ethical reasoning to address global challenges.

The proposed model builds on the existing model's strong grounding in liberal arts philosophy. In the new program, students learn about the past and the present *and* develop capabilities to navigate the future. Moving beyond an emphasis on discipline-specific content coverage, the new model highlights exploration, explanation, and ethical response to change. Driving the proposal is the underlying question of how students can be prepared for many possible futures.

2. Literacies as Central

A key change in the proposed program is to center literacies throughout the General Education experience. A required 3-credit course on Information Literacy, completed early in the students' journey, will integrate research, communication, and ethical reasoning across all areas. Faculty will develop topic-style courses instead of having students take an identical course, partnering with other domain experts, like JMU Libraries, as appropriate. This course equips students to engage with diverse sources (textual, visual, digital, algorithmic), recognize bias, question credibility, and navigate misinformation—skills critical to responsible citizenship and decision-making.

3. Real-World Application and Scenario-Based Learning

Assignments in the new model are designed to reflect real-world complexity: data analysis, media critique, ethical dilemmas, and the societal impacts of emerging technologies, including AI. In the new curriculum, students will make meaning of uncertainty, evaluate risks, and communicate under pressure, preparing them for life beyond the university in practical, principled ways. Redesigning courses will require resources, including from the JMU Libraries, the Center for Faculty Innovation, and the Center for Assessment and Research Studies.

4. The Introduction of a General Education Capstone

The proposed model provides students with a formal opportunity to integrate and apply learning across domains via a 3-credit senior **Capstone: Navigating Scenarios of Change**—a transformative course where students tackle future-oriented challenge (e.g., climate resilience, algorithmic governance, or the ethics of AI). It's a space for students to practice collaborative problem-solving, scenario development, and strategic thinking.

Flexible implementation pathways, such as embedding outcomes in existing major capstones or creating small-scale interdisciplinary courses, ensure the capstone is achievable while maintaining its academic integrity. Departments may embed General Education learning outcomes into existing major capstones, or offer interdisciplinary, stand-alone courses outside of majors, potentially housed in the JMU Libraries or co-taught by faculty. This flexibility helps manage resources while deepening student learning.

5. Pedagogical Innovation and Support

The proposed program embeds inquiry-driven pedagogy, collaborative instruction, and interdisciplinary teaching models, providing a more streamlined pedagogical practice across the university. Faculty are supported through a proposed "Assignment Kitchen," cross-unit co-teaching opportunities, and embedded literacy support from librarians and technology specialists. Existing

programs like jmUDESIGN and X-Labs could be altered to support faculty in these efforts. These features position teaching, and not just content, as central to General Education's success.

6. Futures Thinking and Systems Analysis

The proposed program builds on current disciplinary thinking and expands into systems thinking, scenario development, and strategic foresight. Students learn to model change, anticipate future challenges, and reflect on the ethical dimensions of uncertainty. These tools, common in policy, design, and global studies, are now brought into the undergraduate core.

7. Structural Streamlining and Flexibility

By reducing General Education credit hours to 30 and organizing them around themes rather than disciplinary silos, the new model supports greater curricular flexibility, especially for students with transfer, AP, or dual enrollment credit. It retains rigor while improving access, transferability, and coherence.

8. Administrative Implications

Implementing this model will require greater coordination, faculty collaboration, and infrastructure investment—especially capstone integration and new interdisciplinary offerings. While the current model is easier to manage within departments, the proposed structure fosters shared ownership and curricular coherence. In return, it offers a more meaningful and future-ready education for JMU students.

A Forward-Thinking Foundation

The proposed General Education program builds on JMU's existing reputation for academic excellence and citizenship. Retaining values that have long defined our university, such as interdisciplinarity, ethical reflection, civic purpose, and academic breadth, it also invites us to imagine JMU as a national leader in futures-oriented undergraduate education by 2035.

Learning Outcomes

Our program proposes eight learning outcomes that build on—and transcend—single disciplines by focusing broadly on problem-solving, effective communication, and research skills (see Appendix 1 for detailed mapping of SLOs). After completing this General Education program, students will be able to:

*Analyze and articulate the dynamics of change***.** Students will be able to identify and critically evaluate diverse perspectives on future societal, technological, environmental, and other transformations, understanding the interconnectedness of these changes. This outcome addresses critical thinking, intellectual agility, and empathy.

*Employ adaptive problem-solving approaches***.** Students will be able to apply interdisciplinary frameworks and methodologies to analyze complex problems and develop innovative solutions. This outcome addresses interdisciplinarity and problem-solving.

*Evaluate and synthesize information with discernment***.** Students will be able to critically assess the credibility, relevance, and bias of diverse information sources and synthesize information effectively for different purposes. This outcome addresses critical thinking and information literacy.

Make ethically sound decisions in evolving scenarios. Students will critically assess the ethical implications of new technologies and unforeseen circumstances, applying ethical frameworks to anticipate consequences and make responsible, foresightful choices that contribute to individual and collective well-being. This outcome addresses ethical reasoning and research skills.

*Communicate effectively across diverse contexts***.** Students will be able to construct clear, coherent, and persuasive communications across a range of modalities (written, oral, visual, digital) for diverse audiences and purposes. This outcome addresses effective communication and digital fluency.

*Formulate and conduct inquiry-driven research***.** Students will be able to develop focused research questions, design and execute research methodologies, analyze qualitative and quantitative data, and present their findings responsibly. This outcome addresses interdisciplinarity and research skills.

*Practice intellectual agility and resilience***.** Students will demonstrate the ability to pivot, reframe situations based on new information or challenges, and apply knowledge creatively to novel contexts, embracing uncertainty as a learning opportunity. This outcome addresses resilience and adaptability.

Navigate uncertainty with data-informed decisions. Students will demonstrate proficiency in literacy, critically evaluating information, identifying biases, and utilizing data analytics and visualization to inform decision-making in ambiguous and rapidly changing environments. This outcome addresses critical thinking, information literacy, and adaptability.

Implementation Considerations

Our program would be scheduled for a Fall 2027 rollout, providing enough time for the structural changes, course creation, and faculty professional development necessary for smooth delivery. Structured programming could begin in summer 2026. With our proposal capitalizing on the many current strengths of JMU faculty, staff, administrators and students, as well as leveraging already available resources (from CFI, Libraries, CARS, and other as much as possible, we believe this timeline is achievable.

Administrative Structures

The General Education team would include faculty members, librarians, instructional designers, and advisors. “Literacy Champions” in each discipline will guide integration and share best practices with faculty members.

Professional Development Needs

Robust faculty development will be crucial to help instructors integrate literacy development and interdisciplinary approaches into their courses. The JMU Libraries and/or the Center for Faculty Innovation could provide faculty with the necessary development programs.

A yearly, all-day workshop could also be used to help faculty members develop/design/share assignments and activities.

Assessment

Assessment will focus on evaluating students' ability to apply literacies rather than simply recall information. This could involve rubrics for projects, presentations, and problem-solving exercises. The Center for Assessment and Research Studies could provide faculty with resources to develop these assessment instruments. VALUE rubrics developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) can be used to emphasize SLOs, thereby simplifying and streamlining the assessment experience. Longitudinal tracking of student performance, done in chunks (via portfolios) or during Assessment Day, will be helpful toward ensuring program success.

Challenges

We anticipate some of the following challenges:

- Some faculty resistance to moving from a discipline-specific toward an integrated mindset.
- Course mapping and advising will present some logistical issues related to resources.
- Ensuring equity in professional recognition and incentives will need to be emphasized.
- It may be difficult to present clear messaging to students on how to navigate the program.

Resources Needed

Workload, Staffing, Budget, and Institutional Support

Successful implementation of the reimagined General Education program at James Madison University will require intentional investment in human resources, operational infrastructure, budget planning, and collaboration within and outside the institution. Strategic leadership and careful

stewardship will ensure successful redesign and sustained quality. The digital and data literacy initiatives central to the new framework may underscore a need for new faculty and/or staff positions. For example, data support specialists and academic tutors will be essential to helping students and faculty navigate increasingly complex quantitative and technological content. These support roles should be embedded within existing learning centers or Libraries, with coordination across units to maximize accessibility and effectiveness.

A General Education program of 30 credit hours will likely mean some adjustments to daily operations at JMU. One possibility is that faculty will reallocate some of their workload to course creation or redesign (e.g., an instructor with a 4/4 teaching load previously might now teach three courses per semester and spend the remaining time on instructional design). Another possibility is smaller class sizes, particularly courses involving experiential or project-based learning, (e.g., a Critical Thinking class reduced to 30 seats from 40). In the latter case, course redesign might be carried out by faculty serving on overload task forces.

Librarians, advisors, and faculty will attend a required training session to learn about their roles in the redesigned program. Moreover, JMU Libraries will be centrally involved in facilitating the research and project-focused aspects of the redesign.

Budget

Implementation will require targeted budget allocations in several key areas:

Faculty Support and Incentives: Stipends and/or course releases should be provided to faculty, librarians, and other participants engaged in aspects of the redesign, including course creation, adoption of new pedagogies, major adjustments to syllabi, or significant professional development investments. These incentives support innovation and ensure equity in workload distribution.

Advising Systems: Investments in advising infrastructure, including technology platforms and advisor training, will help students navigate scaffolded General Education pathways, especially those with non-traditional academic backgrounds or complex credit portfolios.

Assessment Infrastructure: Funds should be set aside to build and maintain digital assessment systems such as e-portfolios, dashboards, and rubrics tracking platforms that enable longitudinal data collection and program evaluation.

Marketing and Communication: The budget should include funds for a coordinated communication campaign to reach students, faculty, families, and external stakeholders. Investments in marketing materials and informational events will increase understanding and enthusiasm for the program.

Institutional Support

The General Education redesign will be most effective when supported by robust, cross-campus collaboration. Key institutional partners include:

JMU Libraries: As co-educators and literacy experts, librarians will play a central role in research skill development, digital fluency, and interdisciplinary learning.

The Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI): Could sponsor faculty development initiatives, support course redesign workshops, and promote new pedagogies.

Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS): this team of assessment experts will be essential for supporting assessment practices

Information Technology (IT): The IT team will be instrumental in developing and maintaining platforms for assessment, advising, and digital learning resources.

Academic Advising: Advisors will require professional development and system support to guide students through the new General Education structure and ensure alignment with broader academic goals.

External Partnerships

Finally, the long-term success and relevance of General Education at JMU will be enhanced through strategic external partnerships. Employers, civic organizations, and alumni can provide valuable insights into the real-world applicability of General Education literacies and help co-create public-facing projects, capstone opportunities, and experiential learning experiences. These partners may also serve as program advocates, contributing to its visibility, impact, and ongoing refinement.

Through thoughtful investment in staffing, resources, and partnerships, JMU can ensure that its reimagined General Education program is not only innovative in design but also sustainable in practice—equipping students with the skills, mindsets, and literacies needed to thrive in an uncertain world.

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Appendix 1- Detailed Mapping of SLO

After completing the 2-3 courses in **Meaning, Society, and Tradition,** students should be able to:

Explore the development of human ideologies and cultural traditions.

Understand how economic and social systems affect communities.

Develop critical skills for navigating global conflict and change.

After completing the 2-3 courses in **Science, Technology, and the Natural World,** students should be able to:

Analyze how science and technology influence the natural world

Understand the ethical and societal implications of emerging technologies.

Develop critical thinking skills about future technological and environmental challenges.

After completing the 2-3 courses in **Models, Scenarios, and Trends,** students should be able to:

Develop analytical skills to understand and predict complex systems.

Use predictive tools to make ethical decisions.

After completing the 2-3 courses in **Imagination, Style, and Narrative (3–6 credits),** students should be able to:

Understand the role of narratives in shaping cultural imagination.

Enhance creative, interpretive, and empathetic skills.

Engage with the ethical implications of emerging narratives.

After completing the 2-3 courses in **Significance of Change: Implications, Strategies, and Policies,** students should be able to:

Analyze the social, economic, and political impacts of change.

Develop creative problem-solving and strategic thinking skills.

Use ethical reasoning to address global challenges.

After completing a course in **Information Literacy and Critical Inquiry,** students should be able to:

Develop skills to evaluate and synthesize information across formats.

Understand the significance of research strategies and academic integrity.

Cultivate critical thinking and ethical awareness in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

After completing a course in **Analyze Complex Ethical Dilemmas in Diverse Contexts,** students should be able to:

Consider international perspectives in ethical decision-making

Promote ethical leadership and civic responsibility.

After completing a course in **Research and Communication Skills (Integrated)**: students should be able to:

Develop Research Questions and Perform Systematic Investigation

Communicate Findings Effectively Across Modalities

Develop Skills for Practical Research and Communication

After completing the **Capstone: Navigating Scenarios of Change,** students should be able to:

Apply General Education learning to address complex global challenges.

Engage in ethical reflection and decision-making.

Foster interdisciplinary teamwork and strategic foresight.