

Educating for Life

The mission of the General Education Program at the University of the District of Columbia is to provide all students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that will serve them in their efforts to become lifelong learners, community leaders, and fruitfully engaged professionals in rewarding and evolving careers and endeavors.

Quick Facts

of credits required under old university-wide requirements: 44

of credits required under new GE: 40

*"I never knew that I had that confidence to speak to the audience. After getting involved in this course, my confidence level grew. Now I know that I can talk."
Student in Maxine Legall & Elgloria Harrison's "Health Communication" course
(IGED 130)*

WANTED!

TO TEACH IN GEN ED



DYNAMIC FACULTY MEMBERS

REWARD

OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE INNOVATIVE AND ENGAGING COURSES

"This is my favorite class!"

Judging from their mid-term surveys, students love their GE classes this semester. And why not? Not only do they get to enjoy some of UDC's best professors, they also experience engaging class activities such as debates, cross-cultural interviews, field trips, and peer learning. "This is my favorite class," wrote one student in Helene Krauthamer's "Food For Thought" Foundation Writing class. "It makes me truly feel as though I'm a good writer."

Students develop fundamental skills such as writing and oral communication in GE classes, but they also learn how to think for themselves. "I find myself thinking twice about what's ethical and what's not in my day-to-day life," noted a student in Ed O'Brien's "Ethics in Criminal Law" course." Developing these critical thinking skills is perhaps the most important part of the GE program.

Deep Learning Initiative Holds Promise for GenEd

UDC's new provost, Ken Bain, is on a mission to transform undergraduate education, not just on our campus but across the country. Not long after arriving here, Dr. Bain launched the "Deep Learning Initiative" to spearhead reforms in teaching and learning on campus. This reform effort, led by the Director of the Urban Teacher Academy, Julie Sweetland, is examining ways to create a culture of deep learning among faculty and students at UDC.

Too often, students engage in "superficial" or "strategic" approaches to learning, focusing on surviving their classes or just getting

decent grades. By contrast, students who engage in "deep learning" challenge themselves to embrace the material fully and pursue learning for learning's sake. Deep learning can help students change the way they think and act beyond the classroom – it can quite literally change their lives.

The GE program is a natural place for the Deep Learning Initiative to have an immediate impact. The GE program is designed to give UDC students a common academic experience and offer a variety of high-impact learning opportunities, from writing intensive courses to community-based learning. Professors in GE can spearhead the development of courses that encourage deep learning. With GE's emphasis on creating innovative and engaging new courses, professors can incorporate teaching approaches and learning activities that encourage students to move beyond the "is this going to be on the test?" syndrome. GE can be the vanguard of the movement to build a culture of deep learning on this campus.

GenED Hires Permanent Director

Anthony Mansueto traveled about as far as he could to get to UDC. Currently the Director of the Ketchikan Campus of the University of Alaska Southeast, Dr. Mansueto will soon take the helm of the GE program. He is a graduate of the University of Chicago with a Ph.D. in the Sociology of Religion from the Graduate Theological Union, and he brings extensive experience in higher education to the position. Welcome to the nation's capital!



“This is not an English class – why do I have to write?”

By Deborah Dessaso

Writing is often called the “gateway” skill because without the ability to write well one may find oneself unable to take advantage of many future opportunities. Being able to write effectively is critical not only to academic success but also to success in the world beyond UDC.

Learning how to write is critical to how professors share ideas with students and how students respond. Consequently, from the first day of class, professors in all disciplines should require students to write papers that go beyond merely plopping keywords strategically throughout their papers; instead, we must demand that students create assignments that describe, illuminate, and argue with clarity and concision.

How best to reach this goal? Assign as much writing as possible, particularly in-class writing on spontaneous topics. Students should be expected to communicate what they have learned through many forms of written communication: discussion boards, issue response papers, essays, research papers, field reports. Whatever the method, make your learning outcome that students recognize the “language” of the discipline through critical writing.

Deborah Dessaso is an adjunct professor of English and is the Resource Coordinator for the Academic Support Center.



Develop a High-Impact Course for GE

All year long, faculty members have been participating in eye-opening workshops that have exposed us to cutting-edge research on how students learn. Now, we can put those ideas into practice through the High Impact Course Project. Between 8 and 15 faculty members will be selected to be Myrtilla Miner Faculty Fellows, and they will participate in a series of workshops to help them develop high-impact courses that will encourage their students to be deep learners. To become a Miner Fellow, you may nominate yourself through your dean.

For more information, contact: theprovo@udc.edu. The deadline is April 16, so be sure to get your nomination in! Winners will be selected by May 11.

GenEd Course Spotlight

Love & Death

(IGED 110: Foundation Writing I)

Matthew Petti, Department of English

In GE courses, students tackle life’s big questions – questions about morality, power, relationships, democracy, justice. In this course, Matthew Petti challenges students to think deeply about what he calls “the yin and yang of what it means to be human”: love and death. Through a series of short essays, reflections, class presentations, and a common course portfolio, students build stronger writing skills as they examine a wide range of psychological, sociological, and biological writings, as well as fiction, film, and other media dealing with love and death. It is a course designed to change the way students think about two of life’s most important subjects. As the poet Li-Young Lee once said, “There are only *two subjects: love and death*. Everything else is the dross.”



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Want to Teach a GenEd Course?

1. Attend a faculty training session
2. Develop a syllabus for an interdisciplinary course that meets the GE objectives.
3. Submit your syllabus to the GE Review Committee. The Review Committee consists of faculty members from across the campus who review all proposed syllabi and make recommendations – either to accept, accept conditionally, or reject the course.
4. Make revisions and resubmit your syllabus.

Important Dates

April 16

- *Emancipation Day*
- *Deadline for Myrtilla Miner Faculty Fellowship*

April 25

- *Last day of classes*

May 1

- *Deadline for syllabus submission to teach in GE in Fall 2012*

May 11

- *Winners of Miner Faculty Fellowship announced*

Contact us

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