

Undergraduate Education Working Group Report

April 4, 2016

The Undergraduate Education working group has developed a set of goals and principles for undergraduate education at Emory (included at the end of this report). These goals and principles were the basis for conversations with faculty and some students about the future of undergraduate education at Emory. We received feedback about specific ways to accomplish these goals and principles, and about things that we missed. We concluded our work with a survey to see how faculty would prioritize some of the things that we heard in our conversations (see summaries at the end of this report). Out of these efforts, the Working Group has developed three concrete proposals for inclusion in the Emory College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning.

Recommendations for the Current Strategic Plan

1. *Create a center that provides opportunities for faculty to understand emerging pedagogical practices, resources to support innovative teaching, and recognition of outstanding teaching.*
 - a. Develop a Center for Teaching and Learning, directed to meeting the needs of Emory College of Arts and Sciences. There was strong support for a venue to share experiences, understand best practices, and receive training and resources for supporting teaching. This may have a connection with the University Center for Faculty Development and Excellence at Emory (CFDE), but needs to have a primary focus on the teaching in and needs of Emory College of Arts and Science.
 - b. Consider various types of teaching support offered either within or outside of this Center:
 - i. Opportunities to learn about pedagogy and best practices
 - ii. Support for the development of new and innovative teaching initiatives in an increasingly diverse environment
 - iii. Recognition of good teachers
2. *Infuse Emory research and an inquiry approach into the curriculum, classrooms and experiences of undergraduate students*
 - a. Link the research and teaching missions of the University in ways that will benefit our students and create an inquiry-based curriculum.
 - i. Develop new classes or approaches that bring faculty research into the classroom. We recommend building on existing examples, including the evidence-based QEP.
 - ii. Make engaged research experiences for undergraduates available in more fields of study; these include individual research, faculty-directed projects and group projects in courses.
 - b. Support efforts to find new approaches to introducing students to interdisciplinary inquiry. Interdisciplinarity has been important in both teaching and research in Emory College of Arts and Sciences, and support for new approaches to interdisciplinary inquiry should continue. The Institute of the Liberal Arts (ILA) has piloted examples like sidecar

courses (i.e., paired courses with similar topics who organize an extra hour of joint meetings to discuss the intersections between course topics). Some majors provide opportunities for double majors to explore intersections between their two fields of study.

3. *Take advantage of the diversity of our community, the residential nature of the campus, and our location in a thriving modern city to create opportunities for the life of the mind which extend beyond the classroom, enhance student learning, and create communities of exploration.*
 - a. Bring faculty and academic activities into students' living spaces in residence halls
 - b. Renovate classroom spaces to better reflect current pedagogy. This includes more flexible space and appropriate classroom sizes.
 - c. Leverage the diverse experiences of faculty and students in our curriculum and classrooms.
 - d. Connect courses with the Atlanta community and resources

Issues needing further consideration

Three issues created significant discussion and passion, but there is not clear consensus about how the College might move forward. These are issues that deserve further discussion to develop some agreement on whether these are ideas we want to pursue, and how to do so.

1. **Flexibility in teaching to facilitate research or during career transitions:** Many felt that it makes sense to have more flexibility when assigning teaching responsibilities with faculty research demands in mind. This would allow teaching reductions for those who are in crucial junctures in their research, demanding more dedicated effort than a full teaching load allows. Alternatively, faculty in moments of transition whose research demands are temporarily lower can take on increased teaching responsibilities. However, others worry that this is a slippery slope that will result in a division between those who teach and those who research.
2. **The potential leading role of the Lecture-track faculty in developing and supporting pedagogy:** We have developed a strong lecture-track, but there are some questions about how the role of lecture-track faculty differs (or should differ) from tenure-track faculty. Should lecture-track faculty be expected to take the lead on curriculum matters or be responsible for leading departmental conversations about pedagogy? We discovered large differences across departments in the way lecture-track faculty participate in and are viewed by their departments, and saw no consensus about better defined expectations for LTF.
3. **Explicit, on-going and open discussion of the GER:** There are and have been a variety of issues related to the GER that should regularly involve faculty discussion. Recently, students and some faculty have supported a diversity requirement. There was not strong support nor opposition for this. However, it has been an important demand among students.

Appendix 1: Faculty Survey

Emory College of Arts and Sciences sent out a survey with questions from the four working groups . The question used by the Undergraduate Education Working Group was as follows:

Emory College of Arts and Sciences seeks to provide a challenging and inspiring education for undergraduate students, drawing on the strengths of a research university, and preparing them for ambitious post-graduate experiences, and to be leaders in their professional and personal lives. The questions below will help set the priorities for initiatives within Emory College related to undergraduate education.

Respondents were asked to rank their priorities in sections on Faculty Development and Support for Teaching, Teaching and Engaged Scholarship, and Engagement with Students In and Out of the Classroom. Finally, respondents were asked to choose their ONE top priority from among all the choices. The results below look at those top priorities by track and division.

Table 1
Undergraduate Education Priorities
By Faculty Track (Tenured, Tenure-Track (not tenured), Lecture Track)

	Lecture-track		Tenured		Tenure-Track		Grand Total	
UG Research	5	8.9%	27	16.0%	6	19.4%	38	14.8%
Teaching Cntr Flexible Classrooms	14	25.0%	19	11.2%		0.0%	33	12.9%
Faculty Chairs	8	14.3%	16	9.5%	4	12.9%	28	10.9%
Research in Courses	6	10.7%	16	9.5%	3	9.7%	25	9.8%
Teaching Fund Prof Dev	3	5.4%	18	10.7%	3	9.7%	24	9.4%
Co-taught	7	12.5%	9	5.3%	2	6.5%	18	7.0%
Local Community	3	5.4%	14	8.3%		0.0%	17	6.6%
No Answer	1	1.8%	10	5.9%	3	9.7%	14	5.5%
Internships	2	3.6%	8	4.7%	3	9.7%	13	5.1%
Meals with Students			12	7.1%	1	3.2%	13	5.1%
Mid-sized Classroom	3	5.4%	7	4.1%	1	3.2%	11	4.3%
Live in ResHall	2	3.6%	5	3.0%	3	9.7%	10	3.9%
	2	3.6%	6	3.6%	1	3.2%	9	3.5%
		0.0%	2	1.2%	1	3.2%	3	1.2%
	56		169		31		256	

Table 2
Undergraduate Education Priorities
By Division

	Humanities		Natr Science		Social Science		Grand Total	
UG Research	8	7.8%	17	20.2%	13	18.8%	38	14.8%
Teaching Cntr	18	17.6%	8	9.5%	6	8.7%	33	12.9%
Flexible								
Classrooms	7	6.9%	14	16.7%	7	10.1%	28	10.9%
Faculty Chairs	11	10.8%	7	8.3%	7	10.1%	25	9.8%
Research in								
Courses	11	10.8%	6	7.1%	7	10.1%	24	9.4%
Teaching Fund	9	8.8%	5	6.0%	4	5.8%	18	7.0%
Prof Dev	9	8.8%	4	4.8%	4	5.8%	17	6.6%
Co-taught	6	5.9%	5	6.0%	3	4.3%	14	5.5%
Local Community	5	4.9%	5	6.0%	3	4.3%	13	5.1%
No Answer	7	6.9%	4	4.8%	2	2.9%	13	5.1%
Internships	4	3.9%	3	3.6%	4	5.8%	11	4.3%
Meals with								
Students	4	3.9%	1	1.2%	5	7.2%	10	3.9%
Mid-sized								
Classroom	3	2.9%	3	3.6%	3	4.3%	9	3.5%
Live in ResHall		0.0%	2	2.4%	1	1.4%	3	1.2%
	102		84		69		256	

Appendix 2: Goals and Principles document for the Working Group on Undergraduate Education

Emory College of Arts and Sciences (ECAS) provides an educational experience that challenges our students, expands their knowledge and perception of the world, and prepares them for future endeavors. We offer undergraduates strong grounding in their area of concentration and breadth of study in the liberal arts, developing in our students the commitment and capacity to think critically and creatively, analyze complicated questions to reach thoughtful conclusions, and to communicate those conclusions effectively and persuasively. Grounded in a learning community of undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and alumni, ECAS develops individuals who are prepared to lead in their personal and professional lives.

1. **TEACHING:** Expect that ECAS faculty will be effective, and engaging teachers, who transform their students' understanding of the world. We must provide the appropriate support and resources to allow them to do so.
 - a. Effective teaching is expected of all faculty, and exceptional teaching will be recognized in the process for yearly and career evaluations, & teaching awards.
 - b. ECAS faculty are expected to engage in teaching practices based on evidence. Opportunities and resources to learn about teaching skills and practices, and to develop courses in new formats and modes of instruction must be available to ECAS faculty. Venues must be available for sharing pedagogical experiences and practices with one another.
 - c. The research and scholarship of pedagogy enriches and contributes to excellent teaching in ECAS. ECAS values the development innovative teaching strategies and those who share that knowledge and experience with their colleagues. Lecture-track faculty play a particularly central role in the scholarship of pedagogy because of their focus on teaching, and on pedagogical work in majors and programs. Supporting the work and expertise of lecture-track faculty in scholarship of pedagogy is vital to excellent teaching in ECAS.
 - d. In order to support excellent teaching across ECAS, the quantity, timing and format of specific teaching duties may need to be fluid and tailored to specific circumstances.
2. **CURRICULUM:** Create an open discussion about our curriculum and how best to articulate, address & assess our educational goals.
 - a. Ensure that our undergraduate curriculum meets our aspirations for both depth and breadth in the undergraduate experience.
 - b. Develop opportunities for students to have integrative academic experiences, across students' careers but especially in the senior year, which span the perspectives of their areas of concentration with broader liberal arts experiences. This should include opportunities to connect their studies across disciplines and majors & minors.
 - c. Value interdisciplinary work, following a long tradition in ECAS. Students should be encouraged to think across disciplines and contexts, to integrate and synthesize knowledge, and understand how different perspectives contribute to our understanding of the world.
 - d. Reflect diversity in the curriculum. This should include courses which examine development of identity, and issues of social justice in diverse societies. In addition to offering academic opportunities to study diversity, the diversity of experience and origins of our students should be addressed and valued in our classrooms.
3. **ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP:** Continually engage our students in the research and creative enterprise, creating a community of undergraduates, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows

and faculty working together in ways that both further our scholarly ambitions and offer transformative educational experiences for our students.

- a. Seek to extend the parameters of student engagement with research in all fields, building new pathways for students to engage with and contribute to the research, scholarship, and creative expression occurring at Emory University.
 - b. Classrooms represent one of the fundamental contexts for student engagement with faculty research. ECAS should actively encourage innovations integrating research and coursework, and find opportunities to bring into the classroom research processes, methods or approaches to research, and new research findings.
 - c. Opportunities for engaged learning, inside and outside the classroom, should be a part of our curriculum and every student's educational experience, including creative expression & performance, study abroad, service learning, internships, and field and laboratory courses. Our location in Atlanta, with its rich history, offers opportunities and responsibilities to connect with the local communities and extend the learning environment.
4. **COMMUNITY:** Ground our educational experiences in a learning community
- a. From the residential experience at Emory, create opportunities for the life of the mind to extend beyond the classroom, enhancing student learning and creating true communities of learning and exploration.
 - b. Enrich the experience of our students by increasing their opportunities to engage with, and benefit from, students and faculty from the other schools of Emory University.
 - c. Help students identify and prepare for their evolving personal and professional goals, including in graduate work in their undergraduate field of study and in professional careers outside that field. Faculty play a primary role providing good academic advising to students, and supporting their development through meaningful mentoring.
 - d. Value the diversity among our students, faculty and staff and benefit from the diversity of perspectives and voices on our campus.