National and international education officials, accreditors, and faculty leaders increasingly associate “quality” education with student learning outcomes and continuous quality improvement processes. Moving away from the view of education as a simple act of passing a static body of knowledge from faculty to students, they value education practiced as a commitment to a set of collectively-practiced, ongoing activities: making institutional choices about the most important goals for student learning and defining the learning in terms of desired outcomes; developing a shared faculty commitment to actions such as high impact, active learning strategies and faculty development designed to increase student achievement; making informed judgments about student achievement and the impact of various general education program support processes; and ensuring continuous improvements in the educational program. Despite the commitment of academic leaders and accreditors to these processes, too few institutions have succeeded in applying systematic improvement processes to the general education program. As a result, discussions about higher education accountability and improvement conclude that higher education can benefit from models of innovative, effective, and systematic general education program improvements and assessments.

The Association for General and Liberal Studies is the national organization whose mission is singularly committed to quality general education programs and their central role in the liberal education of students. The organization invites institutions to apply for the 2019 AGLS Award for Improving General Education: Exemplary Program Processes. The Award promotes institutional commitment to continuous quality improvement, recognizes faculty and institutions that practice quality behaviors, and provides much needed examples of effective general education improvement processes. One option for the 2019 Award will recognize institutions committed to systematically verifiable general education learning achieved through co-curricular activities. AGLS will recognize up to three institutions that connect general education program outcomes to innovative co-curricular experiences that reinforce or help achieve an institution’s general education goals. The Awards will be presented during the 2019 Annual AGLS Constitute, September 20 & 21 in Orlando, Florida. Representatives from recognized institutions will be asked to present their assessment processes in an identified special session and, if possible, provide a poster presentation for display throughout the constitute. Recipients will receive the following: a plaque recognizing their successes; recognition on the AGLS website, listserv, and other publications; half-priced Orlando constitute registration for the presenters; and a year’s membership in AGLS for each presenter.

Award Selection and Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by an Awards Committee comprised of AGLS Executive Council members, members of accrediting associations, and recognized leaders in general education. The application narrative questions are based on the Systems Analysis questions found in the AGLS publication, Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review (see www.agls.org for a free download). Evaluation will focus on the innovative and systematic qualities of the institution’s efforts to use co-curricular activities to reinforce or accomplish the goals of general education (Guide question A7) and on how well the institution’s process can serve as a practical model for other institutions. Previously recognized applications can be found on the AGLS website: http://www.agls.org/agls-awards/exemplary-program-awards. The application must describe the full “loop” of co-curricular processes: institutional commitment to improving general education learning through co-curricular activities, implementation of clearly defined co-curricular learning processes, the verifiable impact of the processes on student learning, and the co-curricular improvements that follow from the data review, showing continuing commitment to the processes.
To be considered for the award, an applicant on behalf of an institution should complete:

- Section #1: Contact information for individual submitting the application
- Section #2: Institutional endorsement by either the chief executive or academic officer
- Section #3: Application summary (150 words or less)
- Section #4: Responses to four award criteria, limited to two pages per criterion

**Examples of Evidence for Award Criteria**

Evidence of merit requires answering the questions under each of the criterion listed in the application below. Evidence should focus on specific activities and processes that employ the continuous quality improvement principles discussed in the AGLS publication *Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review*. The application should clearly present the leadership and creative solutions used to address the issues, concerns, and goals relevant to co-curricular general education learning and learning improvement processes. **Supporting material can be summarized as part of the application and narrative but limit your explanations to two pages per criterion. Please do not use links to data and analysis reports; narrative summary of your key results and processes, within the application, is preferable to links that eventually become inoperable.** AGLS offers model narratives as examples of successful processes and assumes that recognized institutions will share with interested parties additional data or program information.

**Award Timeline**

- April 8 Application materials available on AGLS website
- June 15 Materials must be received by AGLS
- June 20 Materials distributed to review panel
- August 1 Recipients notified
- September 21 Recipients’ presentations and awards during 2019 AGLS Annual Constitute in Orlando, FL

**Suggested Reference Material**

*Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Learning* is available for free download at: [www.agls.org](http://www.agls.org). Supporting literature (from regional and specialized accreditors and from AAC&U) is listed in the Guide.

**Share Your Story**

We encourage you to submit a proposal to the constitute related to your submission. This ensures you will be present to accept the award if selected, AND nationally highlight programs that are dedicated to improving general education.

**Application Submission**

Applications may be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat format, sent to Joyce Lucke at executdir@agls.org (preferred), or applications can also be mailed to:

Joyce Lucke, Executive Director
Association for General and Liberal Studies
428 Fifth Street
Columbus, IN 47201
Section #1: Contact Information of Person Submitting Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Megan Sullivan</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Faculty Research and Development and Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
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<td>Institution</td>
<td>Boston University</td>
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<td>Department/Program</td>
<td>College of General Studies</td>
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<td>Street Address</td>
<td>871 Commonwealth Avenue</td>
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<td>(617) 358-0180</td>
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Section #2: Institutional Endorsement

Chief Executive Officer or Chief Academic Officer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Natalie McKnight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Dean, College of General Studies</td>
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<td>Institution</td>
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Section #3: Application Summary

Include a summary of the award application. Please begin the narrative with a brief description of your institution and the time frame for the process. Briefly explain your process and why you think it equates with quality. *The summary should not exceed 150 words.* The text box may be increased in size as necessary.

The College of General Studies at Boston University is a two year program for entering freshmen who will then matriculate into their majors. In 2009 we created a program for first-year students who would enter CGS in January; this program included a study abroad component and explicit co-curricular learning. We began assessing all our programs in 2009, and in 2014, when we had two separate first-year general education cohorts, we performed comparative assessments. Our 2014/2015 and 2016 and 2017 assessment cycles found students had improved in co-curricular learning. We then mandated explicit co-curricular learning for all first-year students and will continue to assess outcomes in co-curricular learning.
Criterion 1: Supporting Co-Curricular General Education Experiences

An exemplary application should clearly describe a research-based process used to address student learning needs via co-curricular experiences. In addition, the application should describe why the program is important to stakeholders. The application should clearly detail the processes essential to engaging all key players in a commitment to co-curricular learning.

Provide a description of how your institution has dedicated itself to co-curricular activities that support and improve the quality of the general education program. Address the following issues:

- The student learning needs that drove the development of the institution’s co-curricular program
- The research that informs the goals of the co-curricular program
- The individuals who defined and identified the expectations for co-curricular general education learning
- The alignment of your institutions co-curricular learning with institutional mission and general education program goals and outcomes
- The efforts to communicate to faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders the institution’s commitment to improving general education learning through co-curricular activities

A brief historical background to contextualize this application

In part because the College of General Studies (CGS) was founded in 1952 as a two-year program to serve WWII and Korean War veterans who would later matriculate into their majors at Boston University, it has always understood that learning outside the classroom enhances students’ experiences. Two hallmarks of our program indicate as much: our team system and our Capstone Project. Students are grouped in cohorts of eighty and share the same team of three professors and one academic advisor. The team meets weekly to discuss student progress and pedagogy and to suggest a learning community outside the classroom. CGS’s mandatory sophomore year Capstone Project asks students to solve real world problems.

CGS first-year students have often read poetry with the elderly; interacted with the homeless; and selected books with The Prison Book Programs. Owing to the rich cultural opportunities in Boston, students have also made use of institutions such as the Museum of Fine Arts and the New England Aquarium. Furthermore, to inaugurate the 21st Century CGS created the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning (CITL). CITL has taken as one of its foci matching first and second year students with faculty to learn how seasoned scholars conduct research in archives and laboratories. In short CGS has always prioritized some form of co-curricular learning. Until fairly recently, however, CGS has not had to opportunity to formalize this learning for first-year students.

The student learning needs that drove the development of the institution’s co-curricular program

In 2013 and owing in part to research demonstrating the value of study abroad, BU President Robert Brown asked CGS to create a pilot first-year program that would allow students to enter BU in January (rather than September) and to study in London the following summer. CGS saw the opportunity to further solidify what it had always considered one of its missions: making connections between classroom learning and the world outside of the classroom. Nearly as soon as our pilot first-year program began, CGS conducted research and assessed results. We surveyed students; asked them to make videos of what they were learning; and assessed their ePortfolios. Because students reported that the experiential learning they were doing in Boston and London was “transformative”; because the videos they posted demonstrated their academic and personal growth; and because ePortfolios made it clear students had excelled anew in one of our important rubric areas, integrative and applied learning, CGS took the next step. We required all our first-year students to participate in co-curricular learning; this meant whether they began our program in January or London, all freshmen would be immersed in explicit co-curricular learning.
The research that informs the goals of the co-curricular program

Our thinking about co-curricular learning has been deeply influenced by George D. Kuh’s 2008 *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, a work published by the AAC&U. Our first-year program requires five of Kuh’s high impact practices and strongly suggests three others: First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities, Writing Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Diversity/Global Research, Eportfolios, and Community Based Learning. Our work in co-curricular learning is situated in relation to these high impact practices. Faculty and staff have also taken the lead from our colleagues who have also been active scholars and have published reviewed articles related to our key co-curricular areas. Kathleen Vandenberg explains the theoretical underpinnings of experiential learning in our first-year program in her “Lessons for Creating an Interdisciplinary Program: Rhetoric Course Design” (*Impact: Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning*, summer 2015). John Regan co-authored “Eportfolios and Internationalization: Meeting the Needs of the Emergent Global Learner” (*Field Guide to Eportfolio*, 2018), which evaluates best practices in study abroad/global learning. Sheila Cordner has edited the forthcoming July 2019 issue of *Impact: Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning* on community-based/experiential learning. Professor Cordner has also been recognized at Boston University as an expert on such learning and has written guides for faculty available through BU’s Center for Teaching and Learning. Finally, it is not just CGS faculty who have learned about co-curricular experiences from our colleagues.

The individuals who defined and identified the expectations for co-curricular general education

A planning group of CGS faculty and two associate deans devised the pilot cohort. They decided to use tipping points in world history to coordinate an interdisciplinary syllabus that a team could follow and that would enable co-curricular learning by connecting what students studied in the classroom to experiential activities in Boston from January to May and in London the following summer. Faculty who would teach in the pilot program chose the co-curricular activities, which tied directly into the texts they assigned. In the first semester these experiences included on-site group work at the Boston Public Library, Boston Athenaeum, Lowell Mill Museum and the Newport Mansions. A tour of the Newport Mansions was used to discuss economic class in a Social Science assignment. Students’ reflections on the Lowell Mill Museum were incorporated into their Humanities paper on women’s poetry. The London semester included visits to Tate Modern, the Globe Theatre, the National War Museum and various public statues and London neighborhoods. All experiences were connected to classroom goals.

The alignment of your institution’s co-curricular learning with institutional mission and general education program goals and outcomes

Faculty and administration met often to ensure the alignment between classroom instruction and co-curricular learning, understanding that this first-year pilot was in the service of undergirding CGS’s general education goals: to help students learn the “knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all of us use and live by during most of our lives – whether as parents, citizens, lovers, travelers, participants in the arts, leaders, volunteers, or good Samaritans” (Task Group on General Education, 1988). More specifically, all classroom and co-curricular learning goals were matched with CGS’s rubric, a rubric our faculty had created and adopted in 2009. The first-year co-curricular learning cohort also asked all students to post their assignments, videos, and reflections in their ePortfolios, which would be used to assess student learning as well as the pilot program.

The efforts to communicate to faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders the institution’s commitment to improving general education learning through co-curricular activities

CGS’s desire to improve general education learning through co-curricular activities was made explicit in all printed material and all material posted on our website about the pilot program and for all subsequent first-year cohorts (which in 2020 will comprise our entire freshmen program). Our guiding Faculty Expectation document was updated to reflect these explicit changes, and additional documents were created for faculty, students, parents, alumni and the BU community regarding experiential activities (“The January Freshmen Program (Boston-London and Boston-New England): Its History and Essential Elements” is posted on our website but requires a BU password).
Criterion 2: Engaging Students in Co-Curricular Learning Experiences

An exemplary application clearly describes the co-curricular program activities, the individuals responsible for the program, and the institutional support for and commitment to the co-curricular program.

Describe how your institution has engaged students in co-curricular general education learning activities. Address the following issues:

- The co-curricular general education learning activities your institution offers to students
- The individuals who defined and structured these learning experiences, including the role staff, faculty, students, and administration played in developing the relevant activities
- The individuals who implemented the activities, including, where relevant, the collaborations with faculty inside or outside the classroom
- The resources (financial, human, physical, etc.) the institution has provided for co-curricular learning activities

The co-curricular general education learning activities CGS offers students

CGS’s first-year program is structured in teams, or cohorts, of approximately eighty students and four faculty members. Two faculty members are from the Division of Rhetoric; these faculty split the team of students, so they can assign more writing. One faculty member is from the Division of Humanities, and one is from the Division of Social Science. Each team also has a dedicated student advisor. Below is a list of the experiential learning assignments offered in one Humanities course. The instructor has incorporated assignments from the Social Science and Rhetoric faculty on her team as well.

1. Attend Dolores Claiborne opera at Boston Symphony Hall and write a reflection of the opera (HU).
2. Attend BU Symphony at Boston Symphony Hall and write a reflection of the building’s interior and Holst’s The Planets (HU).
3. Participate in team trip to Salem, MA. View the Peabody-Essex Museum Exhibit Nature’s Nation: American Art and Environment. Choose one of the art works by an indigenous American artist. Write a 150 word description of the art work using the art history terms we have discussed in class (HU). Use two historical events you have learned about to analyze the art work (SS).
4. Visit the exhibit on Fredrick Douglass and photography at the African American Museum in Boston. Be sure to see the part of the exhibit devoted to the development of photography. Take a photograph of yourself at the exhibit and write about one item of information you learned from the history of photography exhibit (HU). Highlight a photograph of Fredrick Douglas that seems meaningful to you. Create your own caption for this photograph and write an essay on why the photograph is important (SS).
5. Participate in our team trip to Walden Pond in Concord, MA. Tour the Old Manse where Hawthorne wrote the short stories “Young Goodman Brown” and “The Birthmark.” Walk to the Concord Bridge where the memorial commemorates the 1837 monument dedication with Emerson’s poem/lyric “Concord Hymn.” Develop a creative response to some part of your Concord experience — music, poem, photo, or drawing. Post this in your ePortfolio (HU). Reread Thoreau’s essay “Walking” before our visit. Afterward contextualize your experience of visiting Walden Pond in terms of the concept of nature Thoreau outlines in “Walking” (RH).

Other co-curricular activities CGS offer students

Team activities – Students and faculty attend the Salem Witch Museum, the Gibson House Museum, the Lowell Museum and the American Repertory Theater. Because CGS students do not take Natural Science until their sophomore year, there are no team trips regarding science, but various faculty take students to the New England Aquarium. Individual faculty also engage students in activities such as analyzing Shakespeare with people in a local nursing home, selecting and packaging books for incarcerated people, and participating local poetry slams.
The individuals who defined and structured these experiences
CGS faculty and administration defined and structured co-curricular learning experiences. Since Humanities and Social Science courses offer one extra credit for experiential learning, Dean McKnight has mandated that all experiential activities should include a reflection on the experience and must be tied to one in-class assignment, exams, etc. Faculty cannot ask students to engage in an activity outside of the classroom and then fail to relate it to what students are learning in the classroom. Faculty should attend most or all team experiences. Dean McKnight also stipulated how much money each team would be given by CGS to purchase tickets, etc.

The individuals who implemented the activities
The activities were implemented by individual faculty or entire teams with help from CGS administration.

The resources the institution provided
For team activities CGS provides financial resources and “person power.” The Dean’s Office Administrative Coordinator and divisional secretaries meet with teams to coordinate team experiences. Staff purchase tickets, order buses when needed, and make reservations. When faculty create trips solely for their courses, they apply for funding if necessary and coordinate logistics by themselves.
Criterion 3: Evaluating Student Co-Curricular General Education Learning

An exemplary application clearly details the processes and tools used to assess co-curricular activities, and ensure that results are systematically collected, analyzed, and communicated. It should also include a detailed description of the individuals charged with the assessment and the results collected.

Describe how your institution assesses the impact of the co-curricular activities on student general education learning. Address the following issues:

- Your institution’s process for evaluating the impact of co-curricular activities on general education learning, including the tools used and activities assessed
- The processes used to gather and analyze the results
- The individuals who evaluate the results
- The results of the co-curricular activities and what the results reveal about the impact of co-curricular activities on general education learning
- The institution’s process for communicating the results of its evaluation

Your institution’s process for evaluating the impact of co-curricular activities on general education learning, including the tools used and the activities assessed

We assess the impact of co-curricular activities through direct and indirect measures. Regarding direct assessment, in 2008 a faculty committee developed a rubric of seven learning outcomes, outcomes informed by the AACU Values Rubric. Beginning in 2009, we adopted the Digication ePortfolio platform, and since then our students have been required to maintain an ePortfolio for all their CGS course and co-curricular work; currently all 1,100 CGS students use ePortfolios to enhance and archive their learning in our two year program. These ePortfolios have encouraged students to make connections among their classes, reflect on their learning, enhance their academic projects with videos and other images, and archive their writings and co-curricular activities. Our experience with Digication indicates that ePortfolios offer a rich means of assessing student progress. While our first few years of assessment results were encouraging in that they suggested that student improvement in our program is above the national average, we did not realize the full power of co-curricular learning until 2014, when we added a first-year program that was more heavily invested in co-curricular activities. This discovery has dramatically altered how we approach student learning in our program.

We also use indirect assessment of co-curricular experiences. Given that in our college students and faculty are organized into cohorts or teams, faculty often construct their own surveys to assess student learning. Since faculty teams develop their own co-curricular activities and there may be some variance across teams, indirect measures such as student surveys are especially valuable in gauging the impact of specific co-curricular activities.

The processes used to gather and analyze the results and the individuals who evaluate the results

In terms of direct assessment, our Grants and Assessment Committee, comprised of between 10-12 faculty members and led by the Committee Chair John Regan, meet regularly during the fall semester and perform norming activities designed to clarify assessment procedures and ensure inter-rater reliability. In the spring semester each committee member is then given a set number of student ePortfolios to assess using our outcomes rubric and online scoring sheet. The Committee chair collects and analyzes the data with the Dean of the College, and the Dean shares the findings with the Departmental Chairs and Associate Dean Megan Sullivan and considers courses of action based on the results. In terms of indirect assessment of co-curricular learning, faculty are encouraged and empowered to make changes based on results of their own student surveys. Each team of faculty has a group leader who coordinates such surveys and discusses the results with other faculty.
The results of the co-curricular activities and what they reveal about the impact of co-curricular activities on general education learning

Beginning in 2014, we now had two separate first-year general education program cohorts—September and January—and thus we had a unique opportunity to perform comparative assessments of student learning. In our 2016 and 2017 assessment cycles, we discovered that the greater degree of co-curricular learning in our January program significantly and positively impacted student learning in the rubric area “Integrated and Applied Learning: Ability to Make Insightful Connections across Disciplines and Perspectives.” Our comparative assessments of our September and January programs show that no other significant differences in the rates of student learning. The chart below illustrates our findings:

For the next year of our assessment (Sept 2014/Jan 2015 students), the results were strikingly similar. With two years of data that showed the impact of co-curricular activities on student learning, Dean McKnight encouraged faculty in the September program to add or expand co-curricular learning in their course, and she provided funding for that purpose. These actions resulted in an increase in co-curricular activity in September courses, and our current assessment cycle is collecting data to measure the impact of these efforts. (One note: Following the suggestion in the AGLS Guide to Program Review and Assessment to “focus on what will truly be significant information about learning outcomes” (11), we have moved away from an annual assessment of all seven learning outcomes every year to instead focus on a specific outcome or two per year.)

The institution’s process for communicating the results of its evaluation

Our learning outcomes and results of our assessment work are described on our college’s main web page and our Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning (CITL) web site. The CITL site also details our scholarly work in this area. As assessment and learning outcomes become a higher priority in higher education, CGS faculty have shared their insights within BU and across the world at numerous regional, national, and international conferences, including the AAC&U, AGLS, and IUPUI Institute. At the 2018 AAC&U conference we presented on our assessment work regarding co-curricular learning. We also share our work with a consortium of 24 other colleges on the Catalyst for Learning resource site.
Criterion 4: Improving Co-Curricular Learning Processes

An exemplary application clearly describes a program that produces evidence of learning and a process that is not a “one-time” implementation, but a program built with a continuous improvement process. An exemplary application should provide evidence from multiple years of assessment.

Describe your institution’s plans to use its data to mature its co-curricular learning processes. Address the following issues:

- The data-driven co-curricular improvement projects your institution selected in order to improve learning or assessment of the learning
- The individuals who collaborated to identify and plan the improvements
- The individuals responsible for acting on the improvement projects and, if provided, the professional development that was offered to support the improvements
- The level of institutional support offered for the improvement projects
- The plans to follow up on improvement projects and how those plans reflect a regular improvement process
- The results collected as a follow-up on improvement efforts (if they have been collected during a second or later cycle of review)
- The lessons learned from the improvement process

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.

The data-driven co-curricular improvements selected to improve learning and assessment

CGS students have always appreciated the benefit of some form of co-curricular learning, and this was demonstrated to faculty and the College through formative and summative assessment. In 2008, and with support from the Davis Foundation, CGS undertook the task of creating and assessing targeted learning outcomes, outcomes AACU research indicated students needed and that dovetailed with our formative and summative assessment. We have reviewed student ePortfolios every year for assessment purposes and will continue to do so for as long as CGS exists. We find this assessment valuable and instructive. When we had the opportunity to compare what students had learned when they began our program in September of their first-year with what they learned when they matriculated in January of their, we saw that September freshmen needed additional opportunities for co-curricular work. We did something about this: we stated that all first-year students, no matter their start date, would have designed, supported, and assessed co-curricular learning opportunities.

The individuals who collaborated to identify and plan the improvements

Faculty and the Deans at CGS collaborated to identify and plan these improvements. Initially it was the pilot program faculty who were most involved; later all first-year faculty identified and planned improvements.

The individuals responsible for acting on the improvement projects and, if provided, the professional development that was offered to support the improvements

Dean Natalie McKnight, CITL Director and Associate Dean Megan Sullivan, and CGS’s Grants and Assessment Committee led by John Regan have acted on improvement projects and provided professional development. However, it must be said that faculty have also taken ownership; when they see the need to change or tweak a part of the project, they do so. In response to data provided by the Grants and Assessment Committee as well as the research, and in conjunction with the University’s needs, Dean Natalie McKnight provides an overview of improvement projects. The Dean’s Office, with the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning, offer appropriate professional development opportunities. With respect to the first-year program co-curricular learning project, faculty and staff were provided professional development by these entities including BU’s Center for Teaching & Learning, BU’s Office of Global Programs and Boston University London as well as individual guest speakers.
The level of institutional support offered for the improvement projects
In addition to the aforementioned BU Office of the Provost has offered financial support for CGS’s improvement projects.

The plans to follow up on improvement projects and how those plans reflect a regular improvement process; results collected as a follow-up on improvement efforts (if they have been collected)
Our current assessment cycle is collecting data to measure the impact of our efforts regarding co-curricular learning on students who entered our college last September. We will also share what we have learned through this assessment with Boston University’s new general education initiative. Our college’s efforts in fostering co-curricular learning dovetail with Boston University’s new HUB general education initiative launched in 2018. A university-wide general education program, the HUB was created by faculty and administrators across BU and mandates six capacities or habits of learning that all BU students should have before they graduate. While other schools and colleges at BU have had to undergo much effort to meet HUB standards, given our college’s focus on general education, we have only had to tweak our existing curricular. Indeed, we have been recognized as a forerunner in general education and have participated in virtually every aspect of the HUB rollout. Our work on co-curricular learning is appreciated, and the HUB website states that “The BU Hub recognizes the value and impact of learning that happens outside of classroom settings by offering students opportunities to participate in cocurricular learning experiences that combine activities, assignments, and reflection.”

CGS faculty have been involved in campus-wide initiatives to promote co-curricular learning and their involvement has benefited our first-year program. Some have taught in the new BU Cross-College Challenge (XCC or HUB XC 433), the Hub’s signature project-based, one-semester, 4-credit elective course open to juniors and seniors from all 10 undergraduate schools and colleges at BU. A variety of on-campus and community partners present real-world projects, and students develop skills within the context of their team project. One CGS faculty member co-taught a course that worked with the Royall Tyler House (a historical slave quarters) to develop promotional materials and strategies to increase public awareness. Influenced by this approach, one of our first-year Rhetoric faculty then developed a smaller-scale version of this project involving the Salem Witch Museum for his Rhetoric course.

The lessons learned from the improvement process
CGS has learned many lessons throughout our improvement processes but especially with respect to co-curricular learning. First and foremost we have learned that faculty and administration cannot simply assume they know what students are learning. There must be direct assessment; faculty should complete the assessment ‘loop’ in order to be better informed student learning and to make appropriate changes as a result. Second, we have learned that co-curricular learning is far from static. There will be as many changes to the experiential, study abroad, and research opportunities we offer students as there will be changes to our traditional curricular. The trick, we believe, is to embrace this change. Faculty and administration must remain nimble and flexible, and they must recognize that while curricular and co-curricular opportunities will change, but the overarching goal must not be forgotten: we aim to help students see the power of general education for making meaning in their daily lives in college and beyond.