ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2019 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Exemplary Program Processes

Application Submission

Applications may be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat format, sent to Joyce Lucke at execdir@agls.org (preferred). 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>Cory Lock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Associate Vice President for General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>St. Edward’s University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department/Program</td>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
<td>3001 S. Congress Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City, State, Zip</td>
<td>Austin, TX 78704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>512-428-1269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:julial@stedwards.edu">julial@stedwards.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section #2: Institutional Endorsement
Chief Executive Officer or Chief Academic Officer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Andrew Prall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>St. Edward’s University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>512-448-8446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aprall@stedwards.edu">aprall@stedwards.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 will increase as necessary.
ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2019 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Exemplary Program Processes

The St. Edward’s University general education program is a primary way our students encounter, are shaped by, and contribute to our institutional mission. Inspired by our Holy Cross Heritage, the SEU core is designed to help students think critically and creatively, clarify their values and purpose, confront the critical issues of society, and seek justice and peace. From 2014-18, SEU carried out a comprehensive curriculum revision; in particular, we sought to reengage our faculty with the core; maintain our mission-driven focus on effective communication, diversity, and social justice; expand experiential learning opportunities; and revise assessment—all in a smaller credit hour footprint. Our revision prioritized an inclusive process and two-way communication. Implementation in FA18 met these goals according to schedule; the result is a renewed curriculum that prepares graduates to solve the problems of an increasingly complex global society.

Section #4: Award Criteria
Criterion 1: Identifying the need for new program creation or revision
An exemplary application should clearly describe why a program development or review process was undertaken. In addition, the application should clearly describe why the program is important to stakeholders. The application should clearly detail the processes essential to engaging all key players in a dialogue to operationally define the goals of the program revision.

Provide a description of how your institution identified its need to design or revise a general education program and commit to common general education outcomes. Address the following issues:
The learning need at your institution, including the context for the issue and the relevance of the need to institutional mission and values
The process your institution used to identify the need (e.g., review of assessment practices by a campus committee, visit by an accrediting agency, etc.) and operationally define this need
The way your institution communicated this need to faculty, staff, students, and other interested parties, and the process the institution used to create ownership of the issues

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box will increase as necessary.
ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2019 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Exemplary Program Processes

Note: In accordance with the application instructions, this application can be read without web links. They are included simply as supplementary evidence.

St. Edward’s University Institutional Background and Mission
St. Edward’s University (SEU) is a Catholic, liberal arts university and Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) of approximately 4,300 students located in Austin, Texas. The Congregation of Holy Cross founded SEU in 1877, encouraging students to think critically, act ethically, embrace diversity, strive for social justice, and recognize their responsibility to the world community. Today we continue to draw from our founders’ tradition of “whole person education,” inspiring and empowering students to embrace the opportunities and challenges of an interconnected world and to actively promote justice and peace.

Campus Need: Overview and Origins (Apr 2014-Feb 2014)
In 2014 SEU looks to revise our core curriculum. While minor updates, such as writing across the curriculum and global learning initiatives, have been implemented over the years, the curriculum’s philosophical and structural foundations have remained unchanged since 1991. Our core curriculum was innovative when developed, yet new needs and opportunities lead us to comprehensive revision. We seek to address:

• Reduction of core curriculum buy-in and support: Evidence of dissatisfaction with specific curriculum components at this point is anecdotal, but widespread. We seek to reengage faculty with our mission-centered general education (GE) curriculum so that they can pass along the value of the SEU core to students. Our process thus needs to be particularly faculty-led and inclusive. An early step of the process will involve transparently identifying areas of dissatisfaction.

• Decreased participation by full-time faculty in core curriculum courses: A review of our Capstone and 6 Cultural Foundations requirements (the most distinctive features of our general education curriculum) finds adjunct faculty teach 60% of these courses; full-time, non-tenure track teach 15%; and full-time, tenure-track faculty teach only 25%.

• Large and rigid core curriculum: SEU’s 1991 core curriculum model is robust and mission-centered, but the 57-hour size impedes students pursuing double majors, minors, and other forms of study. SEU has a specific list of 10 aspirational institutions we utilize for self-study comparisons. These campuses’ core curricula average 43.4 hours. Additionally, many SEU courses must be taken in sequence and on campus. This rigid structure impedes academic progress of transfer students and those seeking to study abroad.

• Lack of intentional alignment with newly-created institutional LOs: In 2013-2014, SEU identified University Essential Learning Outcomes (UELOs) based upon our mission statement, the AAC&U’s LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, and additional research. The core curriculum should be aligned with the UELOs, which will entail the creation of a new assessment plan. The relevant UELOs focus on communication, critical and creative thinking, problem solving, ethical reasoning, global engagement/cultural competence, and information and quantitative literacies. The new assessment plan should have the ability to show how student performance changes over time and should be able to differentiate the performances of specific student populations.

• Promotion of student engagement with High Impact Practices (HIPs): Our curriculum already utilizes a number of HIPs. Yet, revision offers the possibility to promote further engagement.

Our process begins with the formation of the General Education Renewal Committee (GERC), which is charged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) with carrying out a faculty-led revision process. GERC is chaired by the Director of General Education and has a representative from each of our five schools (including one dean and one contingent faculty member), the Director of Assessment, the Director of Instructional Technology, and the Dean of Student Engagement.
ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2019 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Exemplary Program Processes

In June of 2014 GERC attends the AAC&U’s weeklong Institute for General Education and Assessment. GERC studies best GE practices and receives guidance from Institute Fellows to create a 4-year action plan with a FA18 implementation goal. GERC’s most significant takeaway is that our role is not to find the best curriculum model and “sell” it to the faculty. Instead, we should focus on process, specifically on facilitating a community-led revision with a curriculum model reflective of SEU community priorities and mission.

We begin the renewal process by creating channels of two-way communication. The Director of GE will meet twice a month with the VPAA throughout the 4-year revision, and our dean GERC member will update the Council of Deans. GERC membership is limited in order to keep it nimble and cohesive. Yet regular feedback from the SEU committee is necessary, therefore GERC Advisory (also chaired by the Director of GE) is formed. The group includes a student (who serves as a liaison to the Student Senate), additional faculty representatives, and members from the Library, Marketing, Admissions, the Honors Program, Campus Ministry, Student Academic and Support Services, and Residence Life. GERC Advisory members will promote two-way communication by updating and collecting feedback from their areas on a monthly basis. GERC also creates a general education renewal website that shares committee membership, timeline, resources, data gathered during the process, Twitter feed, and ways to publicly and privately provide feedback. Later in the process, the curriculum model will be shared here.

At the August 2014 General Faculty Meeting (attended by all full-time faculty), GERC shares the needs/opportunities related to core curriculum renewal, lessons learned from the AAC&U Institute, and the proposed renewal timeline. GERC facilitates table conversations (with scribes) in order to capture faculty feedback. GERC invites Paul Gaston, Kent State University Professor of English, AAC&U Institute consultant, and coauthor (with Jerry G. Gaff) of Revising General Education and Avoiding the Potholes: A Curricular Guide for Change as the plenary speaker for the Teaching Symposium. At the Symposium, GERC also offers a session for those who want more information on “lessons learned from the AAC&U Institute” and staffs a table where faculty can provide feedback on a one-on-one basis.

Fall 2014-early Spring 2015 GERC collects feedback and other data from the SEU community. GERC conducts a series of surveys and in-person, open conversations for faculty and staff on the UELOs. GERC reviews peer and aspirational institutions’ core curricula and reaches out to all departments and deans to determine the specific needs of the various majors. GERC surveys both current students and alumni.

From this collection of community feedback, GERC finds the following trends:

- **Areas of dissatisfaction** identified through multiple surveys: Faculty and students express strong dissatisfaction with the GE Capstone course and a preference for signature work in the major. Faculty find the Cultural Foundations courses (which frequently are required to be taught in a single format) too prescriptive. Some faculty question the lecture format of our required, first-semester Freshman Studies course. Sections, which are co-taught by 2 faculty, average 75-110 students, while the university’s average class size is 18.

- The alumni survey is useful in determining strengths. In particular, alumni believe they write significantly better than their peers. They also see the core curriculum’s emphasis on diversity and social justice as fundamental to our mission. They are proud of the signature work of the Capstone project and, in retrospect, appreciate its challenge.

- The review of peer and aspirational curricula identifies experiential learning (EL) as a potential area of growth. While our mission encourages students to act to change the world, the only place where EL is required is the Capstone course, which the campus wants eliminated in its current format.
ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2019 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Exemplary Program Processes

Award Criteria
Criterion 2: Identification of Goals and Procedure Used to Address Needs
An exemplary application clearly delineates a research-based process to address the identified needs of the institution, and how the goals of the new program align with institutional mission. In addition, the application should clearly describe a model that engages a significant number of stakeholders and decision-makers in the program development process.

Describe how your institution identified and approved its new goals and the procedure used to address the need identified in Criterion 1 above. Address the following issues:
The research used to identify the desired goals and the procedures to most effectively address the need
The participants who identified the new program learning goals and related instructional practices
The alignment of the desired program goals and related instructional practices to the institution’s mission
The consistency of the review and approval procedures with existing processes and any new activities or processes required to gain approval

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

Creation of New Curriculum Model with Faculty and Trustee Approval (Feb 2015-May 2016)
GERC chooses to utilize a process involving a two-part curriculum modeling structure (Phases 1 and 2), which will be followed by a straw poll, then an official vote (Phase 3). Experts at the AAC&U Institute warned of the dangers of “group think,” where a group may create a curriculum model without sufficient community input and see itself as charged with “selling” the model to the faculty. The “3 to 1 system” described below is intended to promote creativity and increase opportunities for community input.

Phase 1: Curriculum Drafts (Jan-Aug 2015)
GERC creates three Curriculum Model Groups (CMGs), each made up of 6 faculty, at least 1 of whom is a GERC faculty member. GERC staff members and the Director for Teaching Excellence serve as consultants for these groups. The members of the CMGs are given the data and feedback GERC has previously gathered and a “Primer” of required and supplementary GE revision-related readings. Required materials include the SEU mission and UELOs, excerpts from Gaston and Gaff’s Revising General Education and Avoiding the Potholes, the AAC&U’s LEAP Challenge: Education for a World of Unsung Problems, the AAC&U’s VALUE rubrics, and the Lumina Foundation’s Degree Qualifications Profile.

GERC provides the CMGs with the following “Givens” (required curriculum elements) that have been adapted from GERC’s original needs/opportunities list: 1) fewer credit hours (but no specified size), 2) increased ability of courses to be transferred in or taken off campus, 3) promote HIPs, particularly Living Learning Communities (LLCs), 4) revise the current Freshman Studies model, and 4) scaffold the UELOs in a core curriculum spanning all 4 years. (The old curriculum assessed outcomes almost exclusively in the Capstone course. While this assessment structure provided data on how many students were meeting desired outcomes in areas such as critical thinking, moral reasoning, written communication, etc., it did not show how student performance changed over time. The new system should provide students with repeated encounters with core learning outcomes and be able to assess how student performance changes over time.)

In early February the CMGs begin their work with orientation workshops in a Saturday retreat. Each group develops its own curriculum model in late February and March, presents it to the other groups and the consultants in early April, then revises according to feedback. The three models are completed by early May.

At the August 2015 General Faculty Meeting GERC explains the generative purpose of the three curriculum
models—the goal is not to find the “best” model, but instead to provide a variety of options for consideration. Feedback is collected from the over 120 participating faculty members in the form of table conversations with scribes. GERC also hosts “General Education Revision: A Roundtable Conversation” at the Teaching Symposium a few days later for those interested in more in-depth conversations.

Phase 2: Creation of a Single Curriculum Model (Sept-Dec 2015)
In September, the CMGs are combined into one committee charged with developing a single model that draws from the August faculty feedback. This “3 to 1 Model” proves very useful, as the group is able to pull the most preferred elements from each model. As the curriculum takes shape, the CMG creates UELO “buckets” to track how these outcomes will be addressed. The CMG also draws from the 2014-15 survey results with a focus on significantly transforming the Freshman Studies and Capstone courses, maintaining a focus on diversity and social justice, maintaining a rigorous focus on writing instruction, and creating more flexible core courses that allow for a variety of formats (as opposed to a single course format).

Curriculum Summary (Visual representation of SEU core curriculum and major components)
SEU welcomes first-year students with a Freshman Seminar in which students join a community of learners and actively engage in academic and co-curricular exploration. As they are introduced to our campus life and mission, they develop critical thinking skills by meaningfully confronting questions of social justice. Sections are grouped according to themes, such as Global Engagement, Leadership, Social Justice, Sustainability, and Pop Culture; approximately half these sections are offered as LLCs. Students generally complete Foundations courses (22 credit hours) in their first year and Content and Contexts coursework (21 hrs) in the second and third years. We suggest the curriculum be sequenced as follows: Year 1: Freshman Seminar (in first semester), Writing and Rhetoric 1, Quantitative Reasoning, Modern Language, Oral Communication, and Studies in Theology and Religion. Year 2: Writing and Rhetoric 2 (with a focus on writing in the disciplines), Natural Sciences, Creativity and Making, Exploring Artistic Works, Diverse American Perspectives, and Ethics. Year 3: Global Perspectives (Creativity and Making and Exploring Artistic Works may also be taken this year). No courses are offered in a single template format; instead, consistency is maintained through common LOs and other elements and a proposal/recertification system.

Flagged Mission Marker courses can be taken in the major or core curricula (frequently in Years 2 and 3). There are two Writing-Rich flags (a lower- and an upper-level writing-intensive course with a focus on revision), a Social Identities flag (a course with a focus on diversity, equity, and social identity) and Experiential Learning for Social Justice flag (where students deepen their awareness of social problems and participate in community-based activities addressing these issues). Mission Markers promote integrative learning between GE and the majors.

In Year 4, students complete a Culminating Experience (CE) that integrates and applies the depth of learning in the major and is facilitated by skills and perspectives gained through the core curriculum. The format of this signature work project varies by discipline (such as a research endeavor, work of creative expression, or a community-engaged project). In all CE courses students refine and showcase their abilities to solve problems, reflect in a meaningful way on their work, and communicate effectively.

Phase 3 Community Approval (Jan-Apr 2016)
In January of 2016, GERC faculty members present the curriculum at school discussion sessions. In early February, the GE Director shares the proposed curriculum to the Student Senate, where it is met with considerable enthusiasm. GERC also presents the framework at an open session targeting contingent faculty and staff, but open to the entire SEU community. GE revision and the proposed curriculum framework are
As GERC prepares for a faculty vote, it considers the feedback AAC&U Institute expert, Paul Gaston, who warned of the morale-damaging potential of a failed vote. February 29-March 4 GERC therefore conducts a straw poll of all faculty (contingent and tenure track) and key staff with an option for responders to provide written comments. Results are posted to the GERC web site: 70% of respondents fully support, 17% support but suggest a change, 6% do not support. Because there are no significant trends in suggested changes, GERC leaves the model unchanged, but posts a written explanation of their decision to the web site. In 4 meetings (January 29, February 5, February 26, and April 1) the Faculty Senate discusses both the straw poll of the SEU community and the preparation for the official Faculty Senate vote.

From April 11-14, 2016 the Faculty Senate invites members of the Collegium (consisting of all faculty plus contingent faculty teaching 2 or more courses) to participate in an electronic vote. The final vote is 131 Yes, 13 No, and 5 registered abstentions. The curriculum is approved by 91% of participating voters. In May the Director of GE presents the curriculum and the faculty vote results to Board of Trustees and receives their unanimous support.

Award Criteria
Criterion 3: Actions Taken
An exemplary application clearly details the steps used to implement the new or revised program and ensure that implementation remained on track. It should also include a detailed description of the individuals required for implementation, and how their support was garnered.

Describe the actions taken by your institution to achieve the goals and implement the program designed to address needs. Address the following issues:
The participants involved in the implementation process
The process used to gain faculty, staff, and administrative support for and participation in the implementation, and the consistency of the process with existing institutional processes
The action steps identified and taken to implement the program, including professional development
The activities used to check and maintain the progress on the new program implementation

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.
ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2019 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education: Exemplary Program Processes

The specifics of each requirement must be articulated before review by the Curriculum Committee (CC) and formal approval by the Academic Council (AC) (a larger group made up of CC members, the provost, deans, the Registrar, and other relevant staff members). Common LOs for each requirement are important for curriculum coherence, and some interdisciplinary requirements require more specifics to be fully understood by the SEU community. GERC therefore assembles Requirement Development Committees (RDCs) of 3-6 content experts for each requirement; interdisciplinary requirements, such as Creativity and Making or Global Perspectives, require representatives from the broad variety of disciplines that contribute to the requirement. October 2016-January 2017 over 80 faculty serve on RDCs and draft descriptions, LOs, and other GE requirement details. In February, SEU community feedback on the drafts is collected, and the RDCs revise accordingly. The CC and AC formally approve the curriculum elements from Apr-Oct 2017 in preparation for Bulletin revisions and the FA17 GE course proposal process.

New Administrative and Communication Structures and Resources (Sept 2017-Dec 2018)
While curriculum refinement and approval takes place, we also need to create new oversight and communication structures. In July 2018, SEU prioritizes GE leadership by converting our GE Director to an Associate Vice President for General Education position for the next 3 years of Implementation (with the position to be reevaluated at that point). The AVP for GE reports to the Provost (the VPAA position became a Provost position in July 2018) and serves on the Council of Deans. She oversees a GE budget that supports core curriculum programming not owned by a particular department or school (such as the Freshman Seminar, peer mentors, and common theme programming).

Because the GE revision phase ends with the implementation of the new core with incoming FA18 students, GERC’s work ends. It is replaced with a 1-year General Education Implementation Group (GEI), chaired by the AVP for GE and comprised of a representative from each school, the Assistant Director of Assessment, the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Director of Instructional Technology. GEI carries out processes directly related to GE Implementation, such as creating the new assessment structure (see below—Criterion 4) and the GE Suggested Course Sequencing guide. A related group develops transition-related policies related to transfer of GE credit, a guide for students to switch to the new GE curriculum, etc.

SEU previously had a GE oversight body, the General Education Advisory Committee, but this committee could only make recommendations. The Faculty Senate converts this body into the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), a group that directly oversees the GE curriculum. It is chaired by the AVP for GE, with members from each school, plus the Assistant Director of Assessment. GEOC devotes the 18-19 school year to writing (and getting approved) new GE administrative policies. AGLS’s Improving Learning in General Education is useful in identifying needs. These include GEOC’s charge, an appeals policy (for if a course is rejected to count for GE credit), a timeline and policy for recertifying courses to count for GE credit on a 4-year rotation, a schedule and procedure for regularly examining the diversity and appeal of the GE courses, and a plan for reviewing and acting upon GE assessment results (GE administrative contacts and committees will run the process and suggest interpretations of results; GEOC will review assessment overviews and faculty/administrator responses, make recommendations, and advocate as necessary). GEOC identifies pathways of communication with the Faculty Senate and CC. While the GEI will phase out at the close of the first implementation year once the special needs of implementation have been met, GEOC, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, will be the long-term GE oversight body.

Someone must be responsible for achieving GE expectations, and one committee alone cannot do this work. SEU therefore identifies administrative contacts for each GE requirement. For some requirements, such as
ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES
2019 AGLS Awards for Improving General Education:
Exemplary Program Processes

Ethics, this is simply a department chair. For some that are department-specific but have heavy workloads
related to training and oversight of adjunct faculty, such as the writing requirements, this is a coordinator with
dedicated release time. Four interdisciplinary requirements, Exploring Artistic Works, Creativity and Making,
Diverse American Perspectives, and Global Perspectives, require a coordinator plus a committee with
membership related to the departments that contribute to the requirement. A committee with an
uncompensated chair position oversees each of the Mission Markers; however, in assessment years chairs will
receive stipends for their additional work. Coordinator duties include reviewing petitions for transfer of credit,
ensuring sufficient GE sections, reviewing transfer petitions, collecting and reviewing GE syllabi, and
providing faculty resources as relevant to the requirement. Coordinators additionally communicate GE
expectations, oversee assessment processes, and lead faculty conversations about assessment results.

A website transition takes place from the previous WordPress GE renewal site to the official, SEU general
education website. The new site offers a GE curriculum visual and description, the SEU core LOs (see
below), the GE requirement LOs, the GE administrative contacts, information on the Freshman Seminar/
common theme/learning communities, a list of transfer equivalencies, a summary of the previous curriculum
(for upperclassmen still under that program), and FAQs. To SEU community members the site provides the
Suggested SEU Core Sequence, the SEU Core Curriculum Overview, and various petitions and forms.

Implementation also requires campus outreach. Communication with upper-level administrators includes an
update on GE Implementation to the Board of Trustees, along with an interactive activity to help them better
understand the curriculum. The AVP for GE meets three times with the President’s Leadership Cabinet
regarding GE Implementation and the developing First Year Experience. In addition, offices like Admissions
Career Services, Advising, and Orientation leaders require updates. GE implementation information is also
shared at the August General Faculty Meeting, Teaching Symposium, and multiple Faculty Senate meetings.

Faculty professional development is fundamental to re-envisioning GE and takes multiple forms. In 2018 our
Innovation Fellows (a program co-led by the Center for Teaching Excellence and Instructional Technology)
focus exclusively on GE courses. In 2019 GE is a prioritized theme, and approximately 75% of the proposals
address it. Fellows receive a $1200 stipend, participate in the 2-week summer Innovation Institute and
subsequent activities, and share their work out with other faculty during the school year. In the 18-19 school
year, CTE programming related to GE includes dedicated GE strands within the Teaching Symposium; a
discussion series on the SEU mission; a series related to diversity and inclusion pedagogy, and individual
workshops on utilizing rubrics, transparent assignment design, and HIPs. Additionally, in preparation for
Implementation, SEU sends 5 members of the GE Implementation group to the 2018 AAC&U Summer
Institute on Integrative Learning and Signature Work. The Institute’s guidance related to signature work
shapes our new Culminating Experiences. The group leaves with and carries out a yearlong action plan that
addresses promoting integrative learning in the new curriculum.

The Freshman seminar and Living Learning Community HIPs have been significantly transformed due to
GE revision. In 2014 only a few halls of freshmen were in LLCs; in Fall 2018 46.3% are in FSEM LLCs, and
the remainder are in a FSEM-based learning community, participating with a faculty member and peer mentor
in at least 15 hours of co-curricular engagement (funded by a FSEM budget). All faculty developing a new
FSEM and related co-curriculars receive a $500 stipend, as well as support from the Director of the FSEM
and a staff member from the Office of Student Transitions. All FSEM faculty and peer mentors receive
training on campus expectations for these HIPs. Peer mentors are paid for their work, and faculty receive
stipends. LLC group coordinators receive a course release for their yearlong activities. Many FSEM faculty,
mentors, and students serve on the committee that selects the annual freshman common theme and speaker.
Award Criteria
Criterion 4: Evidence of Improvement and Continuing Commitment to the 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 core program built around a continuous improvement process. An exemplary application should provide evidence from multiple years of assessment.

Provide evidence of the success of your improvement strategy and your institution’s continuing commitment to the goals and processes used. Address the following issues:
The evidence of student learning and the analysis of the results
The relevance of the results the general education program needs identified by the institution
The communications used to inform faculty, staff, administration and students of the results
The evidence of on-going commitment to the planned improvements and checks on the improvements

Please limit your response to two pages. The following text box may be increased in size as necessary.
Development of New Assessment Structure (Sept 2018-Apr 2019)
The GE Implementation group (GEI) oversees the new GE assessment plan’s creation. Though GE renewal was guided by the UELOs, and each GE requirement has its own outcomes, core curriculum-specific LOs are needed to convey the GE program’s value and guide assessment. In FA18, GEI reviews the SEU mission and the AAC&U VALUE rubrics, then surveys faculty regarding what constitutes the “heart” of GE. GEI creates 6 SEU core curriculum GELOs: civic engagement/social responsibility, communication, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, intercultural knowledge, and problem solving/innovative thinking. GE administrative contacts and faculty then identify GE requirement alignment with 1-2 core GELOs, which will be assessed on a 3-year cycle. In “Year 0” (18-19) critical thinking is assessed in the Freshman Seminar (FSEM) as a trial run of the new system. Year 1 (19-20) assesses critical thinking and intercultural knowledge. Year 2 (20-21) assesses communication (oral and written) and civic engagement/social responsibility. Year 3 (21-22) focuses on ethical reasoning and problem solving/innovative thinking. In the two years that follow the assessment of a particular outcome, faculty will interpret the results, suggest and implement changes, and conduct follow-up assessment if necessary.

SEU faculty also need a shared understanding of GELOs like “critical thinking” and “communication” in order to promote consistency of instruction across requirements and bridge disciplinary perspectives. We therefore create campus definitions of each GELO with corresponding assessment rubrics. We begin the SEU definitions/rubrics creation process by selecting co-facilitators, intentionally drawn from different disciplines, for each GELO. Mar 8, 2019 SEU faculty convene for an overview of the process, then break into separate work sessions on individual GELOs. All groups receive sample VALUE rubrics but are free to develop rubrics as they see fit. In the weeks that follow, work continues as needed. In Apr 2019 GELO work groups share definition/rubric drafts with all faculty and collect feedback. The critical thinking definition/rubric is needed for summer FSEM assessment, so it is finalized. The others will be reexamined and revised in FA19.

Participation in AAC&U’s VALUE Assignment (Re)Design Research Collaborative
In FA18 SEU joins six other institutions to form the AAC&U’s VALUE Assignment (Re)Design Research Collaborative, a 4-semester, “deep dive” into the relationship between assignments and student learning as measured by VALUE rubrics. Campus partners use a “test-retest” model to evaluate assignment redesign efforts. Approximately 30 faculty receive professional development on VALUE rubric use and/or assignment design. In May 2019 SEU submits 200 critical thinking- and intercultural knowledge-related student artifacts to be scored in the national VALUE Institute. Each artifact is coded for student attributes including gender, ethnicity, Pell eligibility, 1st generation, veteran, full-time/part-time, US residency, country of origin, transfer, residential, major, GPA, and credits earned. In FA19 SEU will compare our students’ performance with other institutions’ results, supplementing our recent focus on how sub-populations of SEU students learn in order to better support at-risk populations. SEU brings a particular strength to the collaborative in being the only HSI participating in either the Collaborative or, according the AAC&U, in the VALUE Institute itself (and there are no HBCU or TCU). While other institutions in the Collaborative identify Latinx students as at-risk populations, SEU anticipates our Latinx students will perform at or above Institute norms.

Assessment “Year 0” Results: In 18-19, SEU carries out the faculty-engaged process to identify and define GELOs and create rubrics. Direct and indirect assessment targeted two areas, with promising initial results.

Assessment of critical thinking in the FSEM: students’ performance in their first semester provides a useful baseline for future upper-level assessment. Dimension scores range from 1.34 (“Issues”) to 0.897 (“Others’ Position”) on a 3-point scale. Men and women perform comparably. Business and Education majors appear to struggle with “Issues” and “Student’s Position” compared to their peers in other schools. Latinx students outperform white and non-Latinx students of color on all but two dimensions. Assessment results
need further discussion, but areas of future focus are the categories of “Others’ Position” and “Context,” perhaps through consideration of assignment design. Results will be shared with FSEM faculty in August by email and at a meeting. They will also be shared with deans/chairs as appropriate and will guide the execution of Year 1 assessment. For example, next year we may have instructors pre-score assignments to indicate intended assignment categories and difficulty levels. We look forward to seeing how SEU’s internal assessment corresponds with VALUE Institute results.

**Experiential Learning for Social Justice:** In SP19 we conduct pre- and post-surveys of ELSJ students and instructors that provide indirect evidence regarding perceptions and needs. We see a 12% increase in student awareness of the connection between EL4SJ mission marker and the SEU mission and a 9.4% increase in agreement that pursuing social justice was important to them. These preliminary results suggest the ELSJ flag has had a desired effect, as they speak to EL4SJ LO #3: "Students reflect on how community-based, social justice work shapes their understanding of the course material and their values, and how it relates to a liberal arts education at St. Edward’s University." The survey also identifies instructors’ institutional support needs.

**Evaluation of GE Revision (Process and Resulting Curriculum)**
The large majority of SEU faculty directly participated in GE revision; the process was completed on time with 91% of voters in support. The following bullets outline how SEU addressed GE revision needs.

- **Reduction of core curriculum buy-in: how student, alumni, and faculty perceptions were addressed:**
  - The Culminating Experience was added to the GE Capstone.
  - Freshman Seminar (23 student max) replaced Freshman Studies lecture (taught by 2 faculty, 75-110 students). 78% of FA19 FSEM courses will be taught by full-time faculty; 22% by long-term adjuncts (at SEU 5+ yrs). A new, yearlong peer mentor program begins in FA19. FSEM instructors, peer mentors, and students participate together in 15+ hours of community-engaged/co-curricular learning.
  - Our previous core’s writing- and diversity-related instruction area of strength continues; all students take 2 writing courses and 2 writing-rich flags (and an oral communication course). Diverse American Perspectives focuses on issues of equality and social identity; in addition, all students take a Social Identities and an Experiential Learning for Social Justice (ELSJ) flag.
  - Experiential learning (EL) was targeted as an area for growth. The new core introduces students to EL in the FSEM. The Natural Sciences and Creativity and Making requirements were both redesigned to require a course focus on EL in all sections. The ELSJ flag is devoted to EL. Many CE involve EL.

- **Decreased participation by full-time faculty in core curriculum courses:** Prior to revision, Capstone and Cultural Foundations requirements were taught at rates that averaged 60% adjunct faculty; 15% full-time, non-tenure track (FT NTT); and only 25% full-time, tenure-track (TT) faculty. In the new curriculum all Culminating Experience courses will be taught by full-time faculty. The Content and Context requirements most similar to the previous CULF courses show a dramatic change. In FA18 adjuncts taught 28.4%; FT NTT taught 7.9%, full time, tenure-track faculty taught 63.8% of such courses. In SP19 adjuncts taught 27.3%; FT NTT taught 6.5, full time, tenure-track faculty taught 66.2%.

- **Large and rigid core curriculum:** The previous 57-hour core was out of step with our aspirational institutions’ 43 4-hour average. The new core has 43 GE-specific hours and facilitates transfer of credit.

- **Lack of alignment with institutional LOs:** The new core directly addresses university and GE-specific LOs. It will assess student LO achievement in multiple requirements and can specify the performance of sub-populations so that additional support can be offered if necessary.

- **Promotion of student engagement with HIPs:** Through our GE core, all SEU students experience: Freshman Seminar, Common Intellectual Experiences (including core courses with common LOs, and a 1st year common theme/speaker), 46.3% of 1st year students (FA18) are in LLCs, and we have 4 writing-intensive courses/flags, 3-4 diversity/global learning courses/flags, community-based learning in both the FSEM and the ELSJ flag, and a Culminating Experience (or “Capstone”).