

To: Case Western Reserve University Community

From: Kimberly Emmons, Associate Professor of English & Chair, Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE)

Date: October 7, 2016

RE: CUE Update & Undergraduate Experience Framework Draft

On behalf of the Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE), I am pleased to share the following materials with the Case Western Reserve University community for review and discussion.

In January 2016, the CUE was charged, in part, with identifying "themes and characteristics that are or can be hallmarks of a CWRU undergraduate education." The CUE has spent the past nine months reviewing campus and national information on the current state of higher education. We have sought input from the campus community through surveys, open meetings, and individual conversations. The emerging themes and patterns in our investigations suggest that CWRU has made great progress over the last fifteen years, but that we still have a number of significant challenges to overcome before we can realize our full potential as a premier undergraduate educational institution.

Our work – as a commission and as a campus community – has only just begun. The deliberate process outlined in the attached documents is, we believe, the best approach to imagining and creating the future of the undergraduate experience at CWRU. The CUE views the materials collected here as vital pieces of information to be shared, discussed, and revised with the help of the entire campus community. We look forward to your thoughts and suggestions.

Attachment 1: CUE Progress Report (October 7, 2016)

This document includes an overview of the CUE's work so far and important information about our timeline and future activities.

Attachment 2: "Framework for the Undergraduate Experience at CWRU – Part I: Philosophy of the Undergraduate Experience"

This draft is offered to the university community for comment and discussion; it will be revised by the CUE based on input received through a variety of mechanisms. Details about opportunities to provide feedback are provided in the Progress Report (Attachment 1).

Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE)
Progress Report (October 7, 2016)

In 2001, the President's Commission on Undergraduate Education and Life (PCUEL) issued its final report to the campus community. That effort initiated a number of changes to the undergraduate experience at CWRU, including (in conjunction with the recommendations, in the same year, of the College of Arts & Sciences Task Force on General Education) the development of the Seminar Approach to General Education and Scholarship (SAGES) curriculum, changes to undergraduate recruiting and admissions practices, and renewed campus master planning efforts.

Now, in 2016, the CUE wishes to recognize the engagement of all of those who, over the past fifteen and more years, have committed their time, expertise, energy, and enthusiasm to improving undergraduate education at CWRU. To illustrate some of the changes CWRU has undergone since PCUEL, and to celebrate some of our current strengths, we offer the following comparative snapshot.

Case Western Reserve University: PCUEL to CUE		
	AY 2001-2002	AY 2015-2016
<i>Demographics</i>		
Undergraduate Enrollment	3,381	5,121
Men / Women	61% / 39%	55% / 45%
White / Non-White	73% / 23%	51% / 38%
Ohio Residents	58%	28%
Other US Residents	38%	61%
International Students	4%	11%
<i>Selectivity</i>		
Mean SAT Combined (1600)	1335	1386
Acceptance Rate	71%	36%
<i>Retention & Graduation</i>		
1 st to 2 nd Year Retention	92.4% (2001 entering class)	91.6% (2015 entering class)
4-year Graduation Rate	58.7% (2001 entering class)	64.7% (2012 entering class)
6-year Graduation Rate	81.4% (2001 entering class)	82.1% (2010 entering class)
Bachelor's Degrees Awarded	735	902 (AY 2014-15)

The Undergraduate Experience at CWRU

In 2001, PCUEL recommended that CWRU students build their undergraduate experience around five core educational values, namely: Disciplinary Literacy, Educational Breadth, Creativity, Leadership, and Societal Engagement.¹ PCUEL further recommended that students develop and defend an individual “Educational Plan” under the guidance of a team of advisors and mentors.² These recommendations were shaped by an overarching philosophy of education: that Experiences, specifically including those outside of the traditional classroom, provide an important vehicle for achieving the university’s core educational outcomes.

The values and outcomes outlined by the PCUEL’s final report continue to resonate with faculty, students, and CWRU community members in 2016. The CUE reaffirms the importance of viewing the educational experience as more than the completion of individual classes or the accrual of credentials. Fifteen years after PCUEL’s report, the crucial interconnectedness of students’ curricular, co-curricular, residential, and social activities is even more important to the success of CWRU’s future graduates.

In the CUE’s discussions over the last nine months, examples of the experiences and accomplishments of our students have been plentiful. Among the qualities that these remarkable students share are: intellectual passions that cross disciplinary boundaries, commitments that extend beyond the classroom, and paths through the university that are shaped by their encounters with people, ideas, events, and/or activities.

Inspired by the stories of our graduates’ successes, the CUE began asking the question: What knowledge, skills, and experiences should *all* CWRU undergraduates have to ensure that they will succeed and thrive after graduation?

¹ The PCUEL Final Report (2001) defines these values: “Disciplinary Literacy comprises knowledge of the fundamentals, methodology, ethics, language, history, social context, relevance, and frontiers of a discipline, as well as the ability to communicate important ideas and issues of the discipline to both specialists and non-specialists” (21); “Educational Breadth: Students must engage in a wide-ranging exploration of disciplines other than their major course of study” (21-2); “Creativity is the ability to imagine and realize that which has not hitherto existed, and particularly that which has not previously been imagined” (22); “Leadership is the ability to take initiative and have influence” (23); and “Societal Engagement is an ability and ongoing commitment to act as a member of a community or communities beyond the University and beyond those that are purely intellectual or professional” (23).

² The PCUEL Final Report (2001) asserts “that a successful education owned and undertaken by the student requires four phases: Planning, Preparation, Engagement/Experiences, Retrospection and Assessment....The commission recommends that each student prepare an Educational Plan in cooperation with a mentor and advisor and then defend that plan to a panel of mentors. The Plan is the organizing document of a student’s education, emphasizing, by its preparation, the student’s commitment to his/her education at the University, and emphasizing, by its acceptance, the University’s commitment to the student” (28).

Articulating the Philosophy of our Undergraduate Experience

As the CUE began its discussions, with the intention of identifying the knowledge, skills, and experiences that we believed all graduates should have, one omission continued to challenge our ability to move forward in an intentional and coherent manner. There has never been, to the best of our abilities to locate it, a comprehensive statement of the university's philosophy of the undergraduate experience. While the kernels of such a statement are embedded in myriad places – in departmental, school/college, and university strategic plans, mission statements, recruiting materials, and the PCUEL's final report – we have not found a collective articulation of who we are and what we offer our students as an undergraduate institution.

The CUE believes that such a statement is both an essential tool for continuing to address our ambitious charge and an opportunity for the campus community to develop a shared understanding of our undergraduate mission. This philosophy statement will be the foundation for a series of discussions leading to a unified university strategy for enhancing the undergraduate experience at CWRU. This strategy will, in turn, inform the specific proposals, programs, and initiatives the will enact our shared vision.³

To begin the campus discussion of our Philosophy of the Undergraduate Experience, the CUE offers our draft document, **“Framework for the Undergraduate Experience at CWRU – Part I: Philosophy of the Undergraduate Experience”** (hereafter Framework Philosophy), to the campus community for comment and response. This statement is intended to be forward-looking and aspirational, rather than merely describing our current practices. It outlines a set of goals for CWRU undergraduates and gives us a rubric against which to assess current and future curricula and programs.

We expect our draft Framework Philosophy will provoke lively discussion and debate; we intend to revise it over the course of the Fall 2016 semester based on the responses we receive from across campus. We invite feedback in a variety of ways:

- CUE Liaisons will contact their academic departments and university offices
- Open forum discussions will be held throughout October 2017:
 - Tues. Oct. 18 – 10:00-11:30, Tinkham Veale Univ. Ctr., Ballroom B
 - Wed. Oct. 19 – 4:30-6:00, Kelvin Smith Library, Room LL06-B&C
 - Thurs. Oct. 20 – 12:30-2:00, Peter B. Lewis, Room 203
 - Wed. Oct. 26 – 4:30-6:00, Nord 400
 - Fri. Oct. 28 – 10:00-11:30, Peter B. Lewis, Room 203
- Individual and group responses may be sent directly to pcue@case.edu or submitted online, via anonymous survey: <https://goo.gl/forms/zg7bK4bC9Lx8eQT12>

³ We recognize that what we describe here is a more complex, comprehensive, and protracted process than many CWRU students, faculty, staff, and even CUE members might wish for. Nevertheless, we believe that “quick fixes” or subtle tweaks to curricular or co-curricular initiatives are unlikely to produce the magnitude of change necessary to make our undergraduate experience meet our own very high expectations. Please see the “CUE Agendas & Timeline” section at the end of this document for more details about the timing of the CUE's work.

By the end of these campus-wide discussions, we expect to have developed a statement of our collective vision for the undergraduate experience at CWRU. This vision will, in turn, guide the future work of the CUE.

Beyond the Philosophy of the Undergraduate Experience

Since the federation that created Case Western Reserve University (1967), there have never been fewer than three sets of overlapping general education requirements for undergraduate students. Depending on their major field of study, students have completed one or more of these sets of requirements on their paths to graduation.

Date	Overview of General Education Requirements (GER)/Core Curricula @ CWRU (Based on a review of General Bulletins 1969-2015)	
1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Institute of Technology Core • Engineering Core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Reserve College GER
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Core • Engineering Core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Reserve GER • Liberal Arts/Math Based (LAMBDA) Core
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Core • Engineering Core • College of Arts & Sciences GER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Management GER • School of Nursing GER
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering Core • College of Arts & Sciences GER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Management GER • School of Nursing GER
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAS: SAGES + Breadth • CSE: SAGES + Breadth/Engineering Core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSOM: SAGES + Breadth • FPBSON: SAGES + Breadth

The full implementation of SAGES, beginning in AY 2005-06, ushered in a new format for delivering general education at CWRU. Prior to SAGES, general education requirements (GER) were fulfilled by courses and sequences designed and offered by individual departments. SAGES courses, on the other hand, were intentionally designed to be broad and interdisciplinary in their focus. They were situated outside of departments, taught in a small seminar format, and focused on oral and written communication, ethical deliberation, and faculty areas of research. As it was implemented, SAGES included three non-departmental courses (1 First + 2 University Seminars) and two courses within departments (Departmental Seminar + Senior Capstone).

Throughout our discussions with the campus community, the CUE has consistently heard praise for the idea of SAGES and much of what it has accomplished (especially in terms of student writing), but concern and criticism about the realities of its implementation.

Beyond SAGES, there are four additional sets of general education requirements – one for each of the undergraduate schools and the college – aimed at covering foundational

knowledge and skills and at providing disciplinary breadth to the undergraduate experience. These sets of requirements have considerable overlap, sharing broad disciplinary categories such as Arts & Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences & Mathematics. Nevertheless, they are sometimes challenging for students to navigate, especially when they intend to switch majors across boundaries of the schools/college.

One of the unintended consequences of the implementation of our current GERs has been the loss of flexibility and “elective” space in students’ schedules. The CUE is still investigating this phenomenon, but an initial review of schedules reveals that 37.2% (470 of 1,264) of our current first-year students are taking three or more courses with enrollments of 100 or more. These course triads (and in some cases tetrads) are all clusters of courses that serve as recommended or required starting points for the biological sciences, including pre-medicine, or engineering. If these students are also adhering to the 14-17 credit hour schedule recommended by Undergraduate Studies, they are experiencing only one small course in their first semester, namely First Seminar. They are also experiencing, essentially, no “free” electives in their first semester (though they choose SAGES course topics, students are nevertheless required to enroll in First Seminar). Anecdotal accounts shared with CUE further suggest that incoming students’ decisions about their courses – made largely over the summer before they arrive on campus – have the potential to restrict their options for intellectual exploration and even to foreclose graduating in four years, should they wish to change programs after the drop/add period of their first semester. Although CWRU has a single point of admission policy (in other words, students are admitted to the university and not to specific schools or programs), the experience of our students is often far less flexible than such a policy might imply.

If these observations prove accurate when studied in more detail, they suggest that **many of our undergraduates’ initial experiences on campus revolve around meeting the demands of highly structured programs, rather than around discovering personal and intellectual passions.**

The CUE believes it is time for the CWRU community to think collectively about the lessons we have learned over the last two decades and to imagine a university-wide GER that meets incoming students where they are, prepares them for their future studies, and has the potential to become a hallmark of the CWRU undergraduate experience.⁴

⁴ Since the reforms at Harvard in the late 19th C, which established an elective system for undergraduates, universities have defined themselves, in part, by the combination of requirements and programs they offer to their undergraduates. The character of many universities is amplified by the structures and programs they adopt for delivering undergraduate education (for example, first-year experience programs, core curricula, independent research, community service, experiential learning, internships, and/or study abroad). CWRU has many of the elements that other universities celebrate, for example: all of our students currently participate in SAGES (a core curriculum), which culminates in a senior capstone project (independent research); our departments and programs produce cutting edge research; an increasing number of our students study abroad and participate in experiential learning projects. Nevertheless, as a result of our complicated and blended history as a federation of strong institutions of higher learning, we have neither articulated a unified vision for the undergraduate experience, nor implemented a university-wide GER.

For some of our most structured undergraduate programs, especially those subject to external accreditation reviews, there will necessarily be additional coursework that is foundational for students, but **the CUE believes that all CWRU undergraduates should share a number of experiences that set them on paths that will lead to academic success and personal fulfillment.**

Such a university-wide GER would simplify the curriculum for students (especially those who change majors across schools). More importantly, however, it would put our Framework Philosophy into practice and signal the coherence of our educational mission as a university.

We believe that a successful university-wide GER would:

- Focus on foundational skills, such as communication and critical thinking, that are vital to all disciplines
- Encourage exploration of a variety of ideas and disciplines
- Foster ethical and critical perspectives that enable students to recognize and solve complex social, political, economic, technological, and global problems
- Invite students to share intellectual experiences with peers whose backgrounds, interests, and strengths differ from their own

While the CUE agrees in principle about the need for a university-wide and distinctive general education experience for our undergraduates, we have only begun imagining what that experience might include. Our discussions so far have made no assumptions about the structure, content, or number of credit hours involved in such a university-wide GER.

As we continue to discuss the possibilities, the CUE will be guided by the Framework Philosophy statement (as it is revised based on campus feedback), by the input we receive from the university community, by the results of additional internal and external research into the undergraduate experience, and by the recommendations of the CUE Working Groups (see below).

CUE Working Groups

To continue addressing our charge, the CUE is in the process of forming five working groups to address specific topics related to the overall undergraduate experience at CWRU. The work of each of these groups will be informed by the final Framework Philosophy document, as well as by additional materials, resources, and campus input.

These groups will be assembled over the course of the fall semester and will begin their work in January 2017. The goal is to have these groups present their recommendations to the CUE in early September 2017.

- The **Curriculum Working Group** will assess how well the current undergraduate curriculum meets the goals and aspirations set out in the Framework Philosophy. This group will focus primarily on the current GERs and foundational course offerings within each school/college and will seek to understand how those elements prepare students for the focused academic work of each disciplinary program. The final recommendations of this group will include identifying elements of the GER/curriculum that are working well (and therefore should be kept) and those that are not aligned with the Framework Philosophy or are flawed in their implementation (and therefore should be modified).
- The **Undergraduate Education Working Group** will identify best practices for delivering general education to undergraduates, focusing in particular on innovative educational practices that are congruent with the goals and aspirations set out in the Framework Philosophy. The final recommendations of this group will include conclusions about educational models best-suited to CWRU for developing the qualities we seek in our graduates.
- The **Undergraduate Advising Working Group** will assess the current status and make proposals for the future of undergraduate advising at CWRU, as it should be configured to meet the goals and aspirations of the Framework Philosophy. This includes examining the structures and practices of academic advising, career and post-college planning, and other forms of mentoring/advising of undergraduate students.
- The **Experiential Learning Working Group** will assess the current status and make proposals for the future of experiential learning activities at CWRU, as those activities fit into the goals and aspirations set out in the Framework Philosophy. This group will consider the wide variety of experiential learning, research, service learning, community engagement, and international experiences our students pursue, and make recommendations about how those activities can best fit into the academic and co-curricular programs of CWRU undergraduates.
- The **Campus Culture & Environment Working Group** will identify strengths and make recommendations to address weaknesses and exploit opportunities in the current campus culture and community environment. This group will consider questions of inclusion and diversity, campus climate, student workload and time commitments, wellness, and school spirit.

Expressions of interest from faculty, staff, and students about serving on one or more of these groups are welcome via email: pcue@case.edu. Working groups will be formed in consultation with school/college Deans and with the Provost. Each group will have limited membership, but all groups will seek broader campus input during the course of their discussions.

CUE Agendas & Timeline

The full CUE is scheduled to meet monthly throughout the academic year. In Fall 2016, these meetings will be devoted largely to responding to campus input about the Framework Philosophy and to developing the Initial Strategy for enhancing the undergraduate experience.

The Chair of the CUE (Prof. Kimberly Emmons) will hold drop-in office hours throughout the fall semester. Times and locations for these hours will be posted online, as will periodic updates on the progress of the CUE: <http://casfaculty.case.edu/kimberly-emmons/cue/>.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE AT CWRU Timeline & Milestones	
Part I: Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft released for community discussion (Oct 2016)• Discussion period (October 2016)• Revisions & Final Draft (Nov-Dec 2016)
Part II: Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art & Sciences Group Research (Jan-Aug 2016)• Art & Sciences Group Recommendations (Oct-Nov 2016)• Development of an Initial Strategy (Oct 2016-Feb 2017)• Continued discussion of Strategy and Resources (ongoing)
Part III: Proposals & Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CUE Working Groups Established (Oct-Dec 2016)• Working Groups Meet (Jan-Aug 2017)• Working Groups Submit Recommendations to CUE (Sept 2017)• CUE Discussion & Recommendations (AY 2017-18)• Specific proposals, initiatives, plans submitted to appropriate governance bodies (beginning in Spring 2018)

Provost's Commission on the Undergraduate Experience
Framework for the Undergraduate Experience at CWRU
Part I: Philosophy of the Undergraduate Experience

Case Western Reserve University offers an undergraduate experience explicitly designed to enable high-achieving students to identify and connect their academic interests with their long-term ambitions. As members of a vibrant, engaged, and comprehensive university community, students and faculty at CWRU are purpose-driven. They value knowledge in itself, but are particularly drawn to how academic inquiry can be applied outside the classroom, how it affects their lives and the lives of others, and how their lived experience at CWRU can help them achieve their personal and professional goals.

On our campus – which encompasses the many cultural, historical, and medical institutions of University Circle – and through local, national, and international community activities, students encounter people, ideas, and experiences that shape their values and guide their personal trajectories. The CWRU experience gives our graduates the confidence to approach new situations with intellectual rigor, integrity, and leadership. They have the inclination and the tools to continue learning, growing, and thriving in the multiple pursuits that they will embrace. As alumni, they will enrich the university community as mentors, advocates, and exemplars of the value of a CWRU education.

The undergraduate experience at CWRU intentionally develops the following qualities and skills in our students.

CWRU graduates are:

- **Passionate Scholars** – CWRU graduates gain both deep disciplinary knowledge and diverse perspectives on the questions that they explore through their comprehensive programs of study. They are interdisciplinary inquirers who are able to examine questions from multiple perspectives, to apply knowledge gained in a variety of settings, and to solve complex problems.
- **Engaged & Ethical Citizens** – CWRU graduates are reflective, ethical, and responsible citizens. They are active participants and team leaders, rather than passive consumers, within their local, national, and global environments. They consider the implications of their positions, and they are able to understand and collaborate effectively with individuals whose experiences and viewpoints differ from their own.
- **Successful Change Agents** – CWRU graduates use their skills and knowledge to chart their own path to success, while making the world a better place. They are catalysts for innovation, applying their knowledge and skills to assess problems and opportunities and to design and communicate effective solutions. They are persuasive and articulate advocates for their solutions; they are comfortable using a variety of media to deliver their messages to diverse audiences.

CWRU graduates are proficient in their:

- Disciplinary knowledge and field-specific skills (i.e., major program of study);
- Critical thinking, which requires the skills of discovering, analyzing, and evaluating information presented in a variety of forms (e.g., numerical, rhetorical, visual, and textual information);
- Problem-solving abilities, which require the ability to combine, apply, and integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines, as well as the ability to think and act with an awareness of one's own values and reasoning, and with a responsible engagement with others' perspectives;
- Persuasive and ethical communication practices (including a facility with multiple modes of communication: oral, written, visual, digital, and/or multi-modal) that are appropriate to varied settings (e.g., disciplinary versus general public audiences); and,
- Reflection on their own intellectual and personal development, including their sense of self-efficacy, emotional health, physical well-being, and interpersonal interactions.

Students select and pursue at least one disciplinary major, which affords them the opportunity to develop a deeper and more complex understanding of a subject in which they are passionate.

Disciplinary knowledge alone is too narrow; it is enhanced by the ability to examine ideas, information, and problems from a variety of perspectives. Therefore, students pursue modes of inquiry beyond their major, developing their critical thinking skills as they investigate topics across a range of academic disciplines.

Acquiring knowledge and developing skills is not enough; students must be able to apply their understanding and skills, often in collaboration with others whose experiences and perspectives are different from their own, to find creative and innovative solutions to the complex problems of the future.

Communication, whether in written, oral, or digital form, is the means by which ideas materialize, innovations succeed, and knowledge is discovered and disseminated. Our students achieve proficiency in identifying and articulating problems, and they are persuasive and ethical in disseminating their creative, scholarly, design, and experimental responses to those problems.

The ability to reflect on outcomes and select successful, and improve upon less successful, strategies is essential to remaining flexible, adaptable, and fulfilled. Our students reflect not only on their intellectual journeys, but also on their own physical, emotional, and social well-being. Our students cultivate relationships and strategies that enhance their own strengths and that supply complementary skills and knowledge.