

**Syracuse University Senate
Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies Report**

The Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies makes the following motion:

The Senate approves the shared competencies and framing language as presented in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies.

December 4, 2018

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PART I

Executive Summary

The Syracuse University Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies will offer the following motion at the December 12, 2018 University Senate meeting:

The Senate approves the shared competencies and framing language as presented in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies.

Shared Competencies Proposal

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion | 4) Civic and Global Responsibility |
| 2) Critical and Creative Thinking | 5) Communication Skills |
| 3) Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills | 6) Information Literacy and Technological Agility |

Why Shared Competencies for Undergraduate Education?

- 1) To ensure consistency in student learning experiences across Syracuse University's eleven Schools and Colleges that award undergraduate degrees, and to provide a framework for assessing and improving student learning outcomes.
- 2) With substantial faculty and other stakeholder input, the University committed to a shared competencies model in its Academic Strategic Plan. The University's 2017-2018 institutional self-study, the basis for Middle States re-accreditation of Syracuse University in 2018, re-affirmed this strategic choice.

Timeline

Spring 2019

- Institutional Evaluation and Assessment (IEA) will map existing program learning outcomes to the competencies in consultation with the Schools and Colleges.
- IEA will compile and share information on assessment options/models for the Ad Hoc Committee to consider and recommend.

Fall 2019

- Assessment of one competency (to be determined).
- The Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies will seek to become a permanent standing committee via a Senate bylaw change.

Fall 2020-Fall 2021. Assessment of the other five competencies.

Fall 2022. Report to Middle States Commission on Higher Education that includes assessment results on the shared competencies.

Shared Competencies Proposal

(Approved by the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies, Nov. 5, 2018)

Competency	Framing Language
Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion	Reflection on the dynamic relationships among power, inequality, identities, and social structures. Thoughtful engagement with one's values, intersectional identities, experiences, and diverse perspectives and people. Application of ethical and inclusive decision-making in the context of personal, academic, professional, and collaborative pursuits.
Critical and Creative Thinking	Exploration and synthesis of ideas, artifacts, issues, and events to inform and evaluate arguments, develop new insights, and produce creative work. Reflection on, and application of divergent modes of inquiry, analysis, and innovation to research, knowledge, and artistic creation.
Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills	Application of scientific inquiry and problem solving in various contexts. Analysis of theories, replication of procedures, and rethinking existing frameworks. Supporting arguments through research, data, and quantitative and qualitative evidence that can generate new knowledge.
Civic and Global Responsibility	Knowledge, exploration, and analysis of the complexity surrounding interdependent local, national, and global affairs. Engagement in responsible, collaborative, and inclusive civic and cross-cultural learning, with an emphasis on public, global, and historical issues.
Communication Skills	Effective individual, interpersonal, and collaborative presentation and development of ideas through oral, written, and other forms of expression to inform, persuade, or inspire.
Information Literacy and Technological Agility	Identification, collection, evaluation, and responsible use of information. Effective, ethical, and critical application of various technologies and media in academic, creative, personal, and professional endeavors.

PART II

Why Shared Competencies?

Syracuse University is pursuing a shared competencies model for undergraduate education for two primary reasons.

First, and most importantly, shared competencies will help ensure consistency in student learning experiences and provide a common, coherent framework for assessing and improving student learning outcomes. While individual undergraduate Schools and Colleges will set competency attainment goals for their programs of study, all undergraduates are expected to develop a minimum level of the same six proposed competencies. The primary inputs to a shared competencies model are credit-bearing courses and programs. Competencies have the added benefit of encouraging co-curricular learning activities to enhance individual competency development.

Second, The Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the institution that bestows accreditation on Syracuse University, requires in standard III.5 a. and b., EITHER (a) a free-standing, common general education program across all Schools and Colleges, OR, (b) a shared competencies approach. In addition, Middle States recommends inclusion of the following competencies, all of which are reflected in the Ad Hoc Committee's proposal: (a) critical analysis and reasoning, (b) scientific and quantitative reasoning, (c) cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, (d) oral and written communication, (e) technological competence and information literacy, and (f) the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.

In 2014, with substantial faculty and other stakeholder input, Syracuse University committed to a shared competencies model in its Academic Strategic Plan, the Trajectory to Excellence. Pillar one of the academic strategic plan, focusing on undergraduate excellence and the student experience, committed to the following approach:

“We will identify and develop a set of core competencies that transcend the renowned but often compartmentalized reputations of specific schools, colleges, and programs to give all students the critical skills that inform academic, personal, and professional success.”

Syracuse University's recent institutional self-study ([Recommendation 2](#) - chapter 5), the basis for Middle States re-accreditation of the University in 2018, re-affirmed this strategic choice, with a commitment to:

“Formally adopt, implement, and assess shared competencies as the University's integrative institutional learning outcomes for undergraduate programs to enhance intellectual engagement of all students. Developed by a cross-section of faculty, students, and staff as part of the academic strategic plan Implementation Committee work, the shared competencies will align with the outcomes required of Middle States affiliated institutions that are

often achieved through a general education program and will integrate other Syracuse University-centric outcomes.”

In summary, the Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies believes that the proposed competencies will enhance undergraduate learning and promote compliance with Middle States accreditation requirements.

History of the Shared Competencies

In 2014, a 27-member Academic Strategic Plan Steering Committee guided the planning and fact-finding process, elicited campus input from open forums, and drafted the Academic Strategic Plan, the Trajectory to Excellence. In 2015, the Academic Strategic Plan Working Group 1 developed the following goal that served as the foundation for the shared competencies discussion over the past few years:

“Clearly define and boldly instill a set of distinctive Syracuse University competencies, skills, experiences and values for all undergraduate students, to be collaboratively developed and consistently applied and acted upon at both the curricular and co-curricular levels across all schools and colleges.”

Upon the release of the Trajectory to Excellence, Implementation Working Group 1 was charged to further develop the competencies and plan for implementation. Multiple focus groups, presentations to all of the schools/colleges, and discussions were held to elicit faculty, staff, and student input. Individual comments were evaluated and incorporated into the competencies. This work also supported the new Middle States requirement outlined in [standard III.5 a and b](#), EITHER (a) a free-standing, common general education program across all Schools and Colleges, OR, (b) a shared competencies approach.

In 2016, the [4+4 was developed](#) and shared at a University Senate meeting and across campus.

In 2017, the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies was charged to review the competencies that emerged from Working Group 1, to develop a mechanism for the Provost's Office to regularly review the competencies, and to bring to the Senate any updates.

In spring 2018, the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies conducted a survey of University Senators regarding the 4+4 shared competencies framework. Qualitative feedback from the survey was evaluated and incorporated into the competencies where possible. The following University Senate presentation shared the survey results: [Spring 2018 University Senate Survey Results](#).

In fall 2018, the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies revised the shared competencies, instituted a two-week open comment period, and revised the competencies again. We now propose a draft of the shared competencies approved by the Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies Nov. 5, 2018. The following University Senate presentation shared the survey results: [Fall 2018 University Senate Survey Results](#).

Faculty, Student, and Senate Participation in the Shared Competencies Initiative

Since 2017 the University Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies has led the effort to develop the shared competencies, with the goal of University Senate approval of the shared competencies framework. Most recently, in October 2018, the Ad Hoc Committee drafted a revision of the shared competencies and requested input during a two-week open comment period, by means of a Qualtrics survey. All faculty, University Senators, selected student affairs professionals, and a sample of students received the survey.

The Ad Hoc Committee received many helpful suggestions from the survey. We considered all comments and incorporated them where possible. As part of this process, the Ad Hoc Committee had to balance a variety of views. Key changes implemented by the consensus of the Committee include the following:

- a) The Ethics, Integrity and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion competency was moved to the top of the list to highlight its importance to student learning. We note as well that the Ad Hoc Committee added Ethics and Integrity to the competency list as a result of stakeholder feedback, prior to the survey.
- b) Diversity and inclusion concepts were strengthened with a new title for the competency and stronger framing language, including reference to power, inequality, identities, social structures, and intersectionality. In addition, cross-cultural learning was added to the Civic and Global Responsibility competency.
- c) The concept of collaboration now appears in the framing language for three competencies instead of one.
- d) The title of and framing for the Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills now more explicitly recognizes qualitative approaches to inquiry.

Table 1 displays the competencies before and after the open comment period.

Table 1. Changes in Competency Framework Based Upon Survey Feedback (Oct. 2018)

Competency Title Changes	Previous Framing Language	New Framing Language
<p>Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Ethics, Integrity and Diversity Competency</p>	<p>Reflection on one's own values, identities, and experiences and thoughtful engagement with various perspectives. The application of ethical decision-making skills in the context of personal, academic, professional, and collaborative pursuits.</p>	<p>Reflection on the dynamic relationships among power, inequality, identities, and social structures. Thoughtful engagement with one's values, intersectional identities, experiences, and diverse perspectives and people. Application of ethical and inclusive decision-making in the context of personal, academic, professional, and collaborative pursuits.</p>
<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p>	<p>Exploration and synthesis of ideas, artifacts, issues, and events to inform opinions, arguments, and creative work. Reflecting and applying divergent modes of inquiry, analysis, and innovation to various contexts.</p>	<p>Exploration and synthesis of ideas, artifacts, issues, and events to inform and evaluate arguments, develop new insights, and produce creative work. Reflection on, and application of divergent modes of inquiry, analysis, and innovation to research, knowledge, and artistic creation.</p>
<p>Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills</p> <p>Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning</p>	<p>Applying scientific inquiry and problem solving in various contexts. Generating new knowledge and rethinking existing theories using a wide array of empirical evidence. Supporting arguments using research, data, and quantitative evidence.</p>	<p>Application of scientific inquiry and problem solving in various contexts. Analysis of theories, replication of procedures, and rethinking existing frameworks. Supporting arguments through research, data, and quantitative and qualitative evidence that can generate new knowledge.</p>
<p>Civic and Global Responsibility</p>	<p>Analysis and exploration of complex interdependent local, national, and global issues. Engaging in responsible and inclusive civic activities in relation to personal, public, global, and cross-cultural concerns.</p>	<p>Knowledge, exploration, and analysis of the complexity surrounding interdependent local, national, and global affairs. Engagement in responsible, collaborative, and inclusive civic and cross-cultural learning, with an emphasis on public, global, and historical issues.</p>
<p>Communication Skills</p>	<p>Effective presentation and development of ideas through oral, written, and other forms of expression to inform, persuade, or inspire.</p>	<p>Effective individual, interpersonal, and collaborative presentation and development of ideas through oral, written, and other forms of expression to inform, persuade, or inspire.</p>
<p>Information Literacy and Technological Agility</p> <p>Information Literacy and Technology Skills</p>	<p>Identification, location, evaluation, and responsible use and sharing of information. Effective and critical use of various technologies in academic, creative, personal, and professional endeavors.</p>	<p>Identification, collection, evaluation, and responsible use of information. Effective, ethical, and critical application of various technologies and media in academic, creative, personal, and professional endeavors.</p>

Beyond the most recent changes, the following additional ways that University stakeholders helped develop and shape the competencies.

1. Over ninety faculty, staff, and student representatives participated in working groups that generated the Academic Strategic Plan, the Trajectory to Excellence in 2014. The Academic Strategic Plan called for a competencies approach.
2. Over ninety faculty, staff, and student representatives participated in eight working groups that researched and wrote the 2017-2018 Syracuse Institutional Self-Study submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The self-study re-affirmed the competencies approach.
3. Based upon best practices, benchmarking research, and consultation with multiple stakeholders, the [4+4 shared competencies framework](#) was developed by provost faculty fellow Dr. Rochelle Ford and Terra Peckskamp, Director of Residence Life. The following details some of the extensive outreach that was done to develop and communicate the model: [4+4 Listening Tour](#).
4. In 2017-2018, the University Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies, chaired by Dr. John Dannenhoffer, began work on developing the shared competencies further, with the goal of University Senate approval.
5. In Spring 2018, Dr. Ford presented to the University Senate the results of an Ad Hoc Committee survey on the shared competencies initiative. [Spring 2018 University Senate Survey Results](#)
6. In Fall 2018, Ad Hoc Committee member and Provost Faculty Fellow Mary Graham and Jerry Edmonds, Senior Assistant Provost of Academic Affairs; in consultation with Ad Hoc Committee Chair John Dannenhoffer, met individually with Associate Deans in charge of curriculum to seek their input. Two follow-up email updates were sent to the Associate Deans.
7. In October 2018, the Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies considered several revisions of the shared competencies, going from eight to nine to the current six competencies.
8. In November 2018, the Ad Hoc Committee shared the survey results and revised competency framework in a University Senate presentation. [Fall 2018 University Senate Survey Results](#)
9. The Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies is working on becoming a permanent Senate Committee on Shared Competencies and Assessment in consultation with the Senate Agenda Committee, with a target date of Fall 2019.

Benchmarking Research on the Shared Competencies

In Fall 2018, benchmarking was done with for the purpose of assessing the use of competencies generally, and to gather information on the number and content of the competencies employed by educational institutions.

We consulted the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics to review the knowledge, skills, and attributes represented in the VALUE Rubrics. Since their release in the fall of 2009, The VALUE Rubrics have become a widely utilized and referenced form of assessment on campuses. As of December 2015, the VALUE Rubrics have been accessed by more than 42,000 individuals from more than 4,200 unique institutions, including more than 2,800 colleges and universities. Each AAC&U VALUE Rubric contains a definition and framing language which guided the development of our framing language for the Shared Competencies. In 2015, 85% of AAC&U member institutions reported using a common set of learning outcomes for all students. All of the six competencies proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee are reflected in the top learning outcomes identified by these AAC&U institutions.

In addition, we consulted the websites of sixteen peer institutions, including eleven middle states-accredited universities, of similar size and research emphasis:

	Middle States Accredited	General Education Competencies
1. American University	Yes	Yes
2. Boston University	No	Yes
3. Columbia University	Yes	Yes
4. Cornell University	Yes	Yes
5. Drexel University	Yes	No
6. Fordham University	Yes	No
7. George Washington University	Yes	Yes
8. Georgetown University	Yes	No
9. Howard University	Yes	Yes
10. Lehigh University	Yes	No
11. Northeastern University	No	Yes
12. Rochester Institute of Technology	Yes	Yes
13. Southern Methodist University	No	Yes
14. Tulane University	No	No
15. University of Pennsylvania	Yes	No
16. Wake Forest University	No	No

The findings of this benchmarking research are as follows:

- 1) Nine of the sixteen schools examined (56%) used a competencies approach for general education.
- 2) Among benchmarked universities employing competencies, the average number of competencies was 8.3 (SD=3.2), ranging from 5 to 13.

The following table displays the numbers of these nine universities that use substantially similar competencies to those in the Ad Hoc Committee Proposal:

Table 2. Benchmarking Summary

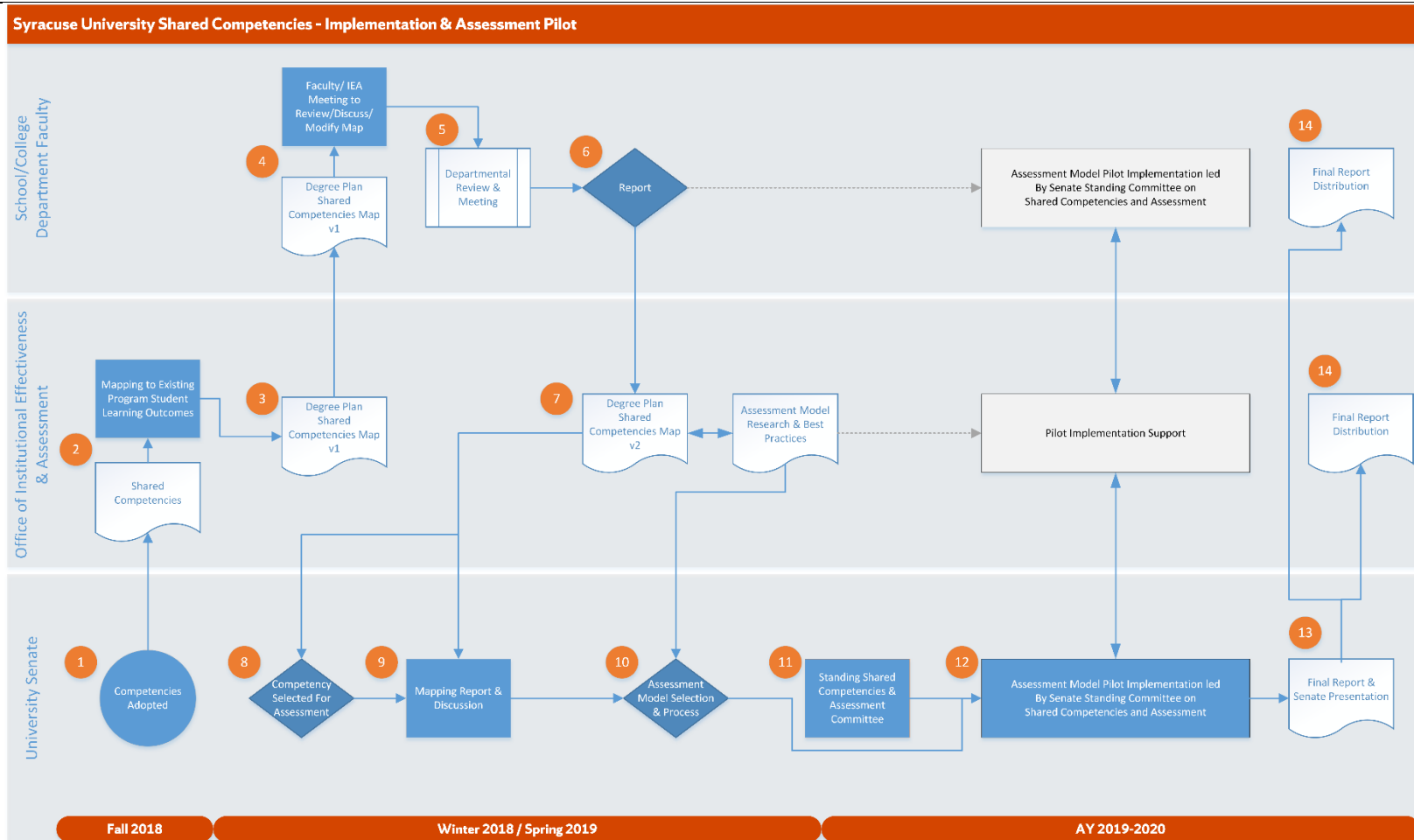
SU Proposed Competency	Number (%) Benchmarked Institutions Using a Similar Competency
Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion	8/9 (89%)
Critical and Creative Thinking	7/9 (78%)
Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills	9/9 (100%)
Civic and Global Responsibility	8/9 (89%)
Communication Skills	7/9 (78%)
Information Literacy and Technological Agility	6/9 (67%)

Table 3. University Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Competencies 2018-2019


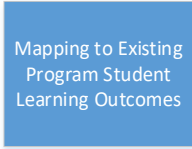




Member	Representing the Standing Committee on ...	Title
John Dannenhoffer III, Chair	Instruction, Chair	Associate Professor, Engineering and Computer Science
Lois Agnew	Instruction	Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Karen Zannini Bull	Ad Hoc Appointee	Associate Dean, University College
Siham Doughman	Curricula	University Registrar, Office of the Registrar
Gerald Edmonds	Guest	Senior Assistant Provost, Academic Affairs
Sophia Faram	Student Association	Student, College of Arts and Sciences
Carol Faulkner	Curricula	Associate Dean, Maxwell School
Mary Graham	Ex Officio Appointee	Provost Faculty Fellow and Professor, Falk College
Gerry Greenberg	Ad Hoc Appointee	Senior Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Anne Mosher	Instruction	Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences
Amanda Johnson Sanguiliano	Instruction	Associate, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment
Emily Stokes-Rees	Agenda Committee Liaison	Associate Professor, College of Visual and Performing Arts
Robert Van Gulick	Instruction	Professor, College of Arts and Sciences

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT PILOT TIMELINE



APPENDIX A (CONTINUED): KEY FOR TIMELINE

Flowchart Icon	Description
	<p>Circle designates the start or end of the activities.</p>
	<p>Square/rectangle designates a process.</p>
	<p>Square/rectangle with two vertical lines designates a sub-process.</p>
	<p>Square/rectangle shape with curved bottom designates a document.</p>
	<p>Diamond designates a decision point.</p>
	<p>Bar designates timeline and passage of time.</p>

APPENDIX B: COMPETENCY MAPPING EXAMPLES

Citizenship and Civic Engagement BA:

Legend						
* Alignment determined from degree plan curriculum						
	Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity	Critical and Creative Thinking	Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills	Civic and Global Responsibility	Communication Skills	Information Literacy and Technological Agility
Characterize different theoretical and practical approaches to historical and contemporary questions of citizenship and civic engagement.	*	*		*	*	
Discover how research in the social sciences shapes policy making at the local, national and international level.	*	*	*	*		*
Identify the range of governmental and non-profit actors in the city of Syracuse and surrounding region relevant to the student's interests.	*	*	*	*		*
Explain, both orally and in writing, complex theories and practices regarding questions of citizenship and civic life.	*	*		*	*	*
Apply disciplinary knowledge and social science methodology to an original research project on a civic, political, or global issue, resulting in a concrete intervention.	*	*	*	*	*	*

Students will develop the competencies via general education courses and fulfillment of degree plan course requirements.

Aerospace Engineering BS:

Legend						
* Alignment determined from degree plan curriculum map						
	Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity	Critical and Creative Thinking	Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills	Civic and Global Responsibility	Communication Skills	Information Literacy and Technological Agility
Use the principles of science and mathematics to identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems.		*	*			
Apply both analysis and synthesis in the engineering design process, resulting in designs that meet constraints and specifications. Constraints and specifications include societal, economic, environmental, and other factors as appropriate to the design		*		*		
Develop and conduct appropriate experimentation and testing procedures, and to analyze and draw conclusions from data.		*	*			
Communicate effectively with a range of audiences through various media.					*	*
Demonstrate ethical principles in an engineering context.	*					
Establish goals, plan tasks, meet deadlines, manage risk and uncertainty, and function effectively on teams.		*				
Apply knowledge of aerodynamics, structures, propulsion, flight mechanics, and orbital mechanics in the analysis of aerospace vehicles.		*	*			

Students will develop the competencies via general education courses and fulfillment of degree plan course requirements.

Communications Design BFA:

Legend						
* Alignment determined from degree plan curriculum map						
	Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity	Critical and Creative Thinking	Scientific Inquiry and Research Skills	Civic and Global Responsibility	Communication Skills	Information Literacy and Technological Agility
Solve Communication problems with a defined process.		*	*	*	*	
Demonstrate skills of indication, accuracy, and use of materials.						*
Create/direct visual form/image in response to communication problems.		*		*	*	*
Visually organize compositions/layouts including image and typographic hierarchy.		*			*	
Describe and respond with clear and original design concepts decisions to the audiences and contexts which communication solutions must address.		*		*	*	*
Understand of the professionalism of basic business practices.	*			*		

Students will develop the competencies via general education courses and fulfillment of degree plan course requirements.

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