

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

Office of Innovation in General Education

General Education Program 2018-2019 Review

THINK BIG  WE DO™



2018-2019 Fun Facts

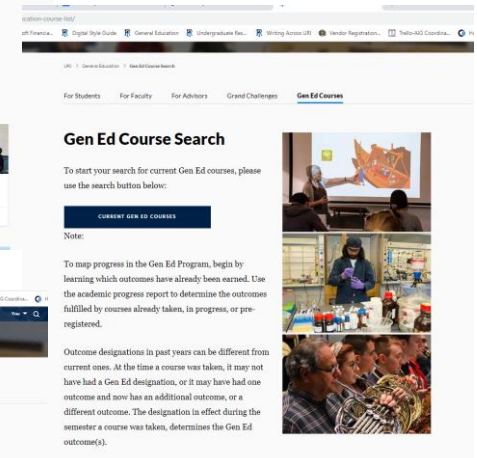
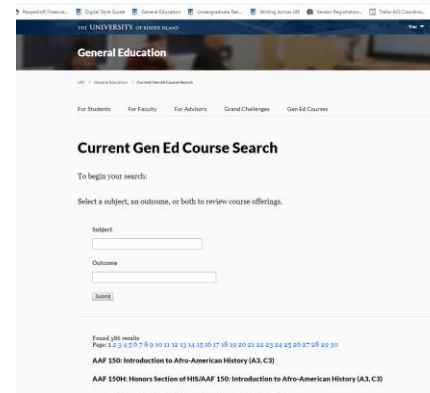
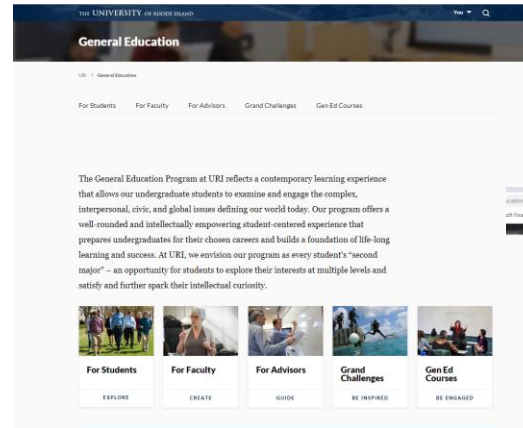
- 2018-2019 – 61 new courses approved & 11 added GC or 2nd outcome
- AAC&U Peer Review Journal Article
 - DiCioccio, R.L., Finan, E., & Kaldor, E.C. (2018). Shifting campus conversations to advance new general education programs. *Peer Review* 20, 22-25.
- James Madison University
<https://www.jmu.edu/gened/IntegrativeCourses.shtml>
- Sharing program design and implementation insights with other institutions:
 - Middle Tennessee State University
 - UNC Greensboro
 - University of Northern Iowa



THINK BIG  WE DO™

2018-2019 Fun Facts

- **New and Improved General Education Website**
 - Migrated to new URI theme July, 2019
 - New and improved content designed to be more accessible to users
 - Re-designed course search page to provide ease of searching for students, advisors and faculty



THINK BIG  WE DO™

Efforts & Endeavors

- **Designing & Delivering Open-Ended General Education GCH Course Topics**
 - **GCH 101G - Interdisciplinary Topics in Civic Knowledge and Responsibilities (3-4 cr.)** *Study of important contemporary interdisciplinary topics with substantial relevance to civic knowledge and responsibilities, incorporating substantial attention to ethics. (C1) (GC)*
 - Topic – **Advocating for Quality Education**
 - Topic – **Envisioning the Future**
 - Topic – **The Troubling Case of Health Policy and Politics**
 - **GCH 102G - Interdisciplinary Topics in Diversity and Inclusion (3-4 cr.)** *Study of important contemporary interdisciplinary topics with substantial relevance to diversity and inclusion, incorporating substantial attention to ethics. (C3) (GC)*
 - Topic – **“This is Us”: Individual and Family Development**

THINK BIG  WE DO™

Efforts & Endeavors

- General Education Course Fairs

- Collaborated with UCAS to hold Spring and Fall 2019 Course Fairs

- Spring 2019

- 60 faculty

- 18 advisors

- 250 students attended

- Fall 2019

- 60 faculty

- 18 advisors

- 340 students attended



THINK BIG  WE DO™

Efforts & Endeavors

- Established Scholar Advocates Group
 - Nine faculty focusing on necessary rubric clarification
 - David Howard – Theatre
 - Karen de Bruin – Modern and Classical Language and Literature
 - Kristine Bovy – Sociology & Anthropology
 - Heather Johnson – Writing & Rhetoric
 - Douglas Reed – Philosophy
 - Christie Ward-Ritacco - Kinesiology
 - Norman Barber – African & Afro-American Studies
 - Elizabeth Laliberte – Geosciences
 - Gerard Jalette – Communication Studies

THINK BIG  WE DO™

Efforts & Endeavors

- Clarified 4 rubrics in terms of language efficacy and element usability
 - Based on faculty assessment data collected from Phase 1
 - Communicate Effectively (B2); Information Literacy (B4); Civic Knowledge (C1); Global (C2)
- Hosted Assignment Alignment Workshop – June 2019
 - Invited 45 faculty to provide feedback on clarified rubrics and ease of realignment with existing course assignments
 - Established alignment workshop model to employ for SLO assessment moving forward

THINK BIG  WE DO™

Next Steps 2019-2020

- Work with Departments to increase Integrate & Apply (D1) course offerings
- Formalize the process to begin assessment of student learning in Fall 2020
- Continue rubric clarification
 - Diversity & Inclusion (C3), Write Effectively (B1), Integrate & Apply (D1)
- Apply to AAC&U Summer Institute 2020.

THINK BIG  WE DO™

Faculty Support & Recognition

Annual Spotlight 2019

Alison Tovar
Jason Kolbe
Douglas Gobeille
Valerie Maier-Sperdelozzi

THINK BIG  WE DO™



ALISON TOVAR

With public health, nutrition, and overall wellness being one of the most talked about subjects in our society today, it is no wonder Dr. Alison Tovar has dedicated her attention to this important topic. Her passion for these issues shines through when teaching her course, NFS 212G – Public Health Nutrition. Dr. Tovar views nutrition as a complex global issue that needs to be addressed both at an individual and societal level. In her grand challenge course, she pushes students to think beyond their own experiences. She moves away from the idea that this is only an individual's concern, and thinks "nutrition is certainly a personal responsibility – but bigger change needs to be made on a more global level." Dr. Tovar encourages her students to question the ethics of health and nutrition through in-class debates, using prompts such as, "Should sugary drinks be taxed as a way of deterring consumption?" Students then research and dissect arguments on both sides. According to Dr. Tovar, this is a favorite assignment among students. It gets them fired up about the ethical issues and other obstacles surrounding nutrition and public health. The course also focuses on the importance of initiating change. Students are charged with identifying nutrition problems on campus and work in groups to design possible solutions. Ultimately, at the end of the semester Dr. Tovar hopes her students are able to think beyond themselves when it comes to nutrition, and recognize the big changes that can have an impact on our society's health and wellness.

NFS 212G
Public Health
Nutrition
College of
Health Sciences



JASON KOLBE

Biology shapes all aspects of human life, including our evolution, our ecological and environmental development, as well as our medical advancements. When teaching BIO 396 – Biology and Society, Dr. Jason Kolbe chooses to focus the course on evolution and our understanding of human origins. Taking a dual perspective, his course examines how evolution impacts our lives and how humans affect evolutionary change. Discussing topics like climate and habitat change, Dr. Kolbe underscores the importance of recognizing that there is a reciprocal connection between society and science – society guides how we engage in science and science influences how society evolves and changes. With this in mind, students are encouraged to integrate their own passions and strengths in answering the big question: what has shaped or caused evolution? Student's interpretations of this question always inspire an eclectic array of projects such as a children's book explaining evolution, an original song and performance chronicling our evolution, and even a cartoon depicting climate change. Dr. Kolbe finds the final project to be one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching the course. Seeing students' creativity and satisfaction in connecting evolution to their interests and future professions undoubtably feeds his own curiosity. When the semester is complete, Dr. Kolbe hopes his students are comfortable with and articulate in defending the evidence for evolution, and most importantly that they recognize the imperfect but vital relationship between society and science.

BIO 396
Biology and Society
College of the
Environment and
Life Sciences



DOUGLAS GOBEILLE

It is an all too familiar question: Do aliens really exist? For Dr. Douglas Gobeille this question never gets old. In fact, every semester it is the first question he asks his students in AST 118 – The Solar System. Described as an astrobiology course, this introduction to planetary science incorporates math, physics, and biology to explore if there is intelligent life beyond earth. Applicable to students from all majors, the course focuses on big topics about the Universe, discussing life forms on other planets and planetary evolution. Dr. Gobeille engages his students by connecting planetary science to students' own academic and personal interests, whether they study philosophy, art, mathematics, or science. In doing so, he provides an array of assignments and activities and allows students to pursue what they are drawn to, what sparks their curiosity. Working with the physics engine to simulate shuttle flights and rocket tests, and observing the night sky at the URI planetarium are two such activities that allow students to put into practice the information they are reading and discussing. According to Dr. Gobeille, the best part of teaching AST 118 is, "when the students force me to grow the same way I am pushing them to grow. They ask questions I have never thought about before and this ends up pushing the entire class." No matter what the subject, Dr. Gobeille's goal is always the one constant – teaching students how to form cogent arguments so they can contribute to the everyday yet powerful conversations around science.

AST 118
The Solar System
College of
Arts and Sciences



VALERIE MAIER SPERDELOZZI

For Dr. Valerie Maier-Sperdelozzi, the three pillars of sustainability, economic, environmental, and social integrity, are far more than a theoretical perspective or ideology, they are a way of life. Whether she is studying lean systems and manufacturing waste reduction or working to reduce the waste stream of her daughter's elementary school cafeteria, Dr. Maier-Sperdelozzi is always focused on promoting a sustainable society. It is this ambition that lead her to design ISU/SUS 261G – Waste Not, Want Not: Sustainable Lean Production. With no prerequisites, this course is geared towards second year engineering, as well non-engineering majors, as an introduction to sustainability. Dr. Maier-Sperdelozzi approaches the topic by first having students engage in self-reflection – examining their own personal behaviors to determine if they promote or undermine sustainability. Conducting a "trash inventory" for several days, students collect base-line data to quantify their waste footprint. Students then determine one personal change they can make to help support a sustainable lifestyle and for 21 days, they contemplate and journal the experience. Dr. Maier-Sperdelozzi believes that this assignment, and the self-awareness it brings, is eye opening and can serve as a powerful motivator for personal change. When students understand their own impact on sustainability, an interest in working to create societal change is more likely to follow. Dr. Maier-Sperdelozzi underscores that witnessing her students' shift in mindset, from unaware, to aware, to focused on making a change, is the most gratifying aspect of teaching the course. Knowing that her students can be inspired to champion sustainability is the most hopeful.

ISU/SUS 261G
Waste Not, Want Not:
Sustainable Lean
Production
College of
Engineering

Faculty Support & Recognition

General Education Faculty Funding

Supporting faculty innovation in designing and delivering general education courses.

- Fall 2018-2019 – awarded \$1,500 for opportunities such as:
 - Student fieldtrips:
 - Conference/workshop attendance
 - Topical research for course development

THINK BIG  WE DO™

Faculty Support & Recognition

The Excellence in General Education Award 2019



Simona Trandafir, Environmental and
Natural Resource Economic
Department



Michael Honhart, Department of History

THINK BIG  WE DO™

Student Buzz About Gen Ed

- Adam Beliveau, Junior, Supply Chain Management
MUS 106 History of Jazz

“This was a very involved class because I was able to dive into the culture of the time and appreciate the impact that jazz has on modern music. The class was incredibly collaborative and allowed students who didn’t have a significant music background to engage in the material.”

- Kiana Cabana, Transfer Student, Psychology
LAN 220 Understanding Language in Cultural Context

“A class I have enjoyed the most is LAN 220, we explore the roots of many languages like English, Arabic, and Italian and discuss the major differences between them. This class is extremely interesting because I can use my personal experiences to connect to the information.”

THINK BIG  WE DO™

Student Buzz About Gen Ed

- Lily Joubert, Junior, Pharmacy

COM 108G Spaceship Earth: An Introduction to Systems

“This course focused on learning about the current environmental challenges we are facing in our world using various mediums such as articles, videos, and documentaries which made learning super interesting and relatable. The course really encouraged critical thinking as I was always asked to come up with possible solutions and alternatives to combat the environmental challenges we discussed.”

- Brooke Fennell, Senior, Public Relations/Communication Studies

JOR 110H Honors Section of JOR 110: Introduction to Mass Media

“This was one of the courses that set me on a new path. The instructor, Professor Kendall Moore brought her compelling vision and enthusiasm to class every week. She pushed us out of comfort zones, having us extemporaneously explain and connect our insight and opinions to media topics and current events and she encouraged us to explore creativity in our assignments by creating and performing short dialogues.”

THINK BIG  WE DO™