General Education Vision Survey 2024

In early 2024, Tennessee Technological University's General Education Vision Committee conducted a survey asking students, faculty, staff, alumni, and industry representatives for their opinions on potential changes to the General Education Program. This survey was conducted via Qualtrics over the two weeks of 2/26/24-3/8/24.

The following tables show the demographic breakdown for the respondents of the survey. Students made up the largest population of respondents at nearly 64%. Likewise, the greatest percentage of students, faculty, alumni, and industry representatives came from the College of Engineering at 27%. The greatest percentage of staff respondents came from departments other than those specifically listed at 31.6%.

Q4 - Please select which of the following best represents you:	Count
TTU Student*	1,301
TTU Faculty*	266
TTU Staff or Admin**	193
TTU Alumni*	223
Stakeholder/Industry Representative*	52

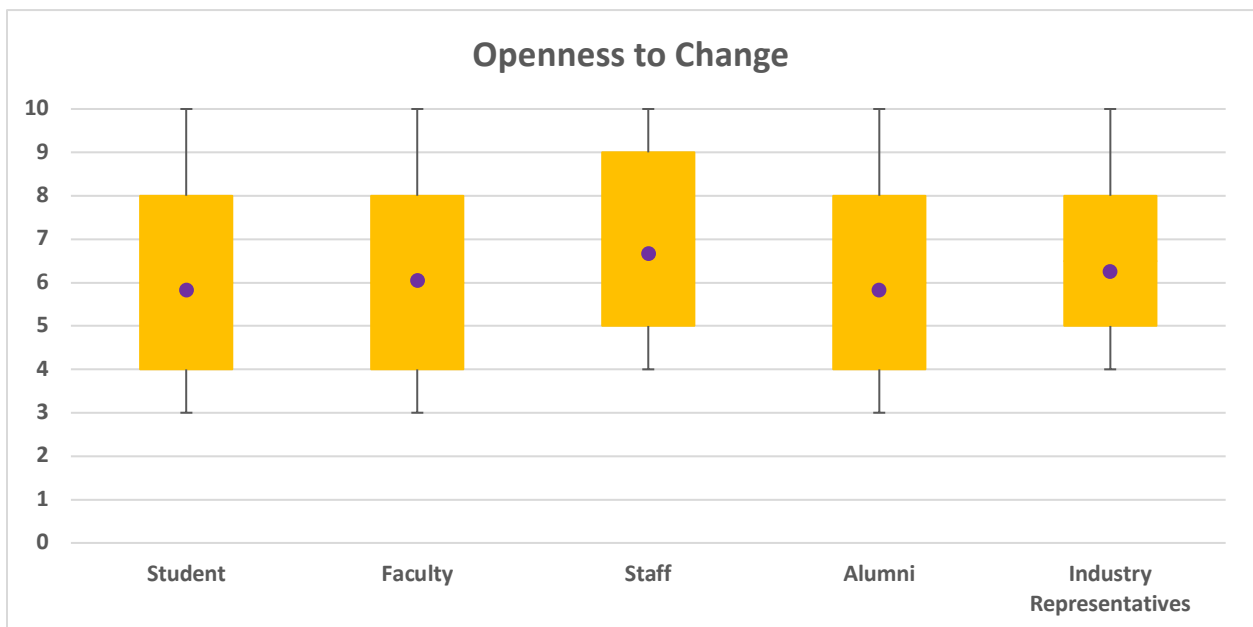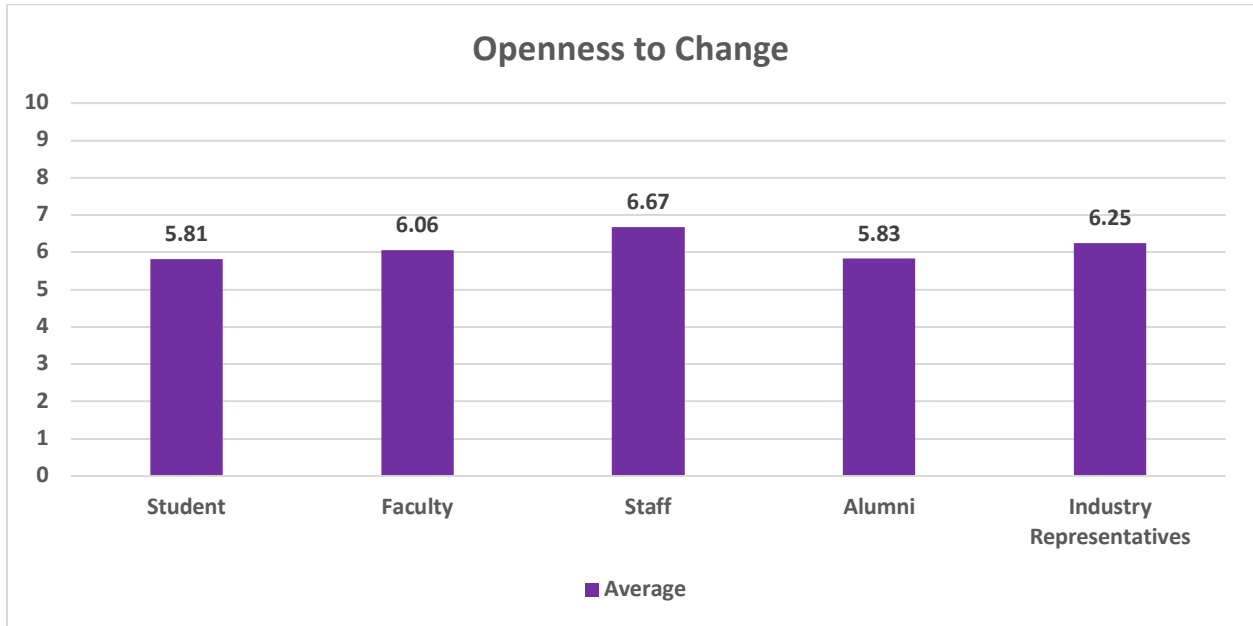| Q5 - Which College are/were you most closely associated with?	Students	Faculty	Alumni	Industry Reps
College of Agriculture and Human Ecology	84	16	14	0
College of Arts and Sciences	232	93	46	3
College of Business	191	21	41	10
College of Education	195	56	39	8
College of Engineering	402	26	58	12
College of Fine Arts	40	12	4	0
College of Graduate Studies	20	0	1	0
College of Interdisciplinary Studies	73	18	11	0
Whitson-Hester School of Nursing	53	15	5	1
Angelo & Jennette Volpe Library	0	4	0	0
Not Specified	11	5	4	18

| Q9 - Which division or unit are you most closely associated with?	Staff or Admin
Diversity and Inclusion	1
Intercollegiate Athletics	3
Enrollment and Communication	28
Planning and Finance	19
Research and Economic Development	11
Student Affairs	16
University Advancement	1
Academic Affairs	33
Angelo & Jennette Volpe Library	5
Student Success Centers	15

Other	61

Openness to Change

Participants were asked to rate their openness to changing the General Education program on a scale of 0-10, with 0 indicating "No changes needed" and 10 indicating "Complete overhaul of General Education." The overall average (5.93) indicates that respondents were roughly in the middle of no changes needed and a complete overhaul. Staff indicated the most openness to change the program at an average response of 6.67, and students were only slightly less open to change than alumni at an average response of 5.81.

Openness to Change

Student: 5.81
Faculty: 6.06
Staff: 6.67
Alumni: 5.83
Industry Representatives: 6.25

■ Average

Openness to Change

Vision Statement Selection

Participants were given 10 possible vision statements or themes to choose from, with one option titled "Other" and allowing the respondent to input their own topic into a text box. Participants were asked to choose 1-3 of these vision statements and then rank them from most important to least important. Though there was a variety in selections for most vision statements, the top three remained consistent for all identified groups: Thinking Critically for the Future; Understanding the Past, Preparing for the Future; and Lifelong Learning.

The graph below shows the total percentage of Vision Statement selections per group.


Vision Statement Total Selections by Group
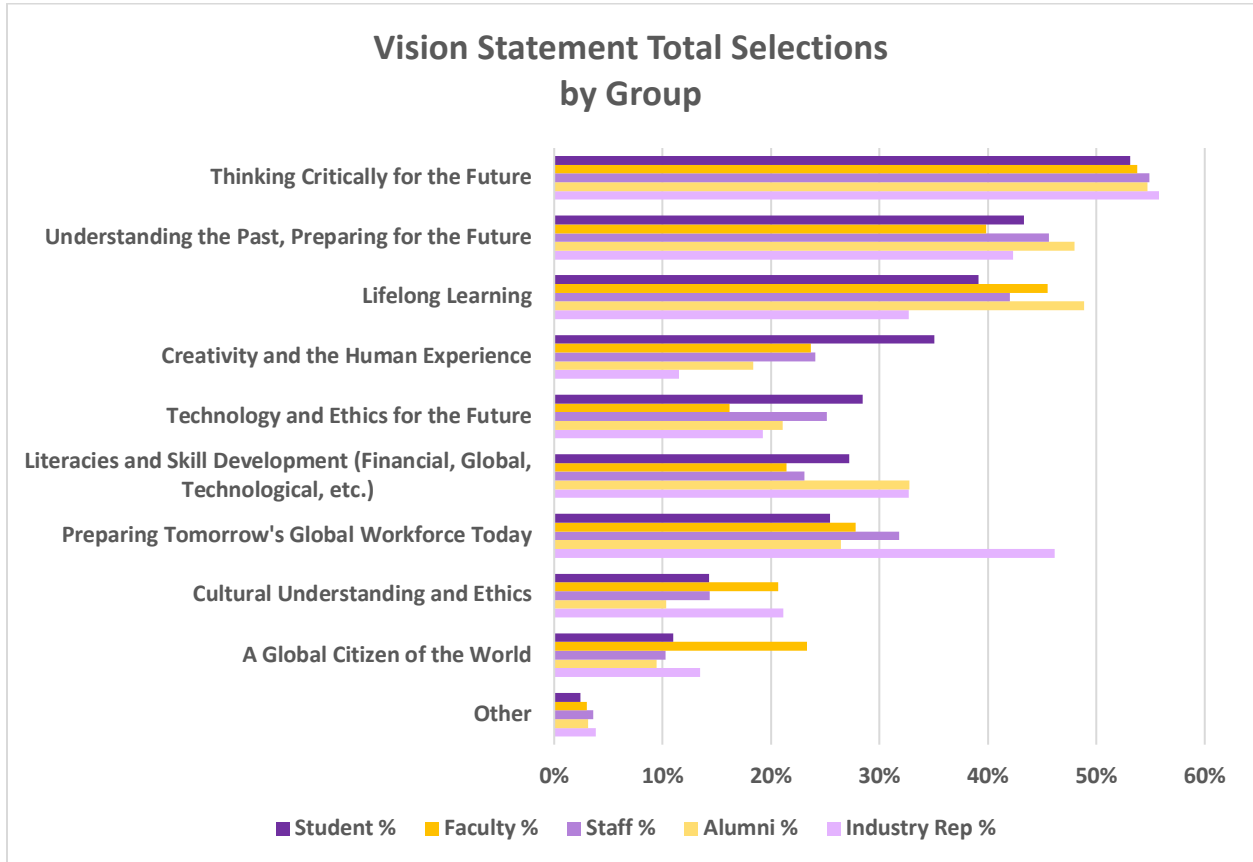
The following graph shows the percentage of total possible scores per topic for each group. Scores were computed by multiplying #1 ranked choices by 3, multiplying #2 ranked choices by 2, multiplying #3 ranked choices by 1, and adding those scores together. The total possible score was computed by multiplying the number of respondents by 3.
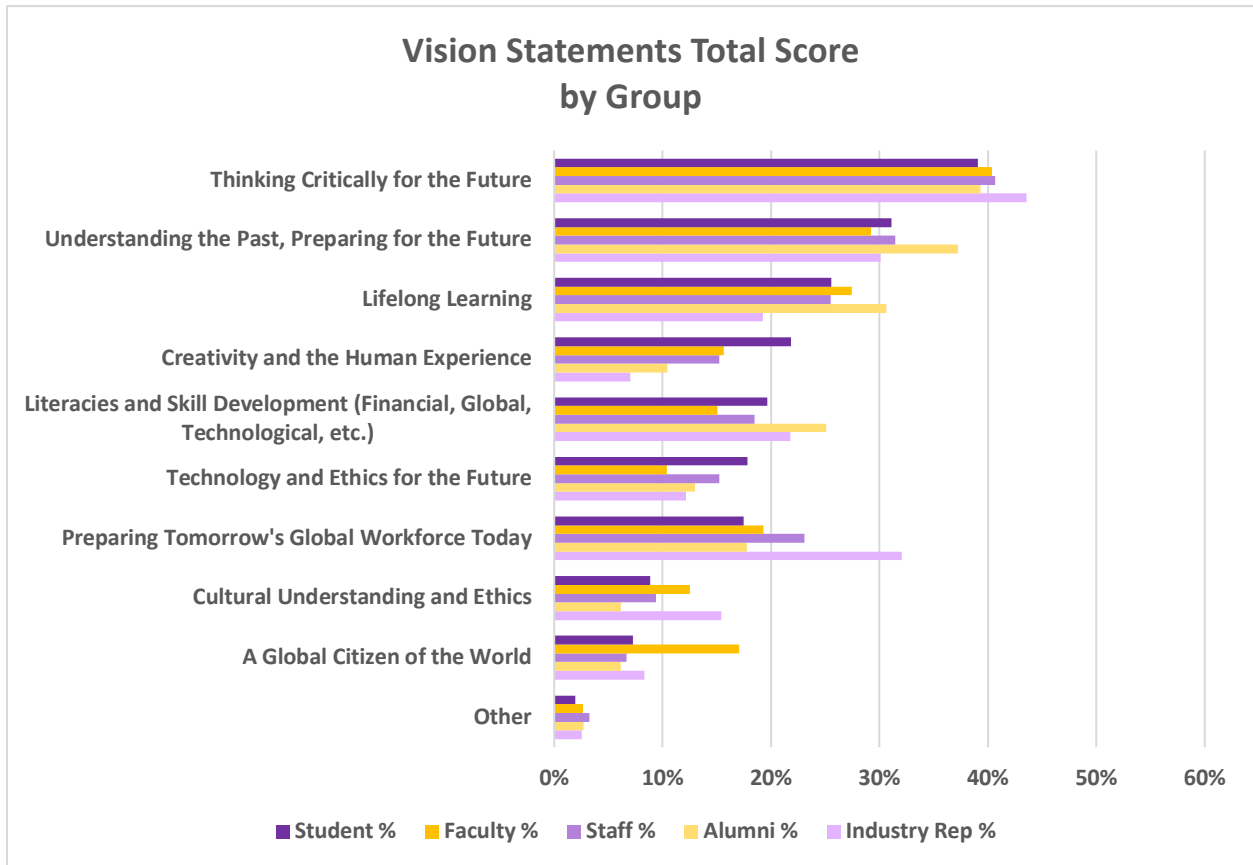
New Competencies

Participants were also asked to indicate how important they felt it would be to include a number of new competencies into the General Education program. Sixteen options were provided, with one option titled "Other" and allowing respondents to input their own choice into a text box. For this question, a Likert scale was used with answers ranging from "Totally Irrelevant" to "Crucial to Include."

The graph below shows the percentage of respondents that selected either "Crucial to Include" or "Pretty Important" for each competency by identifying group. Answers varied across groups, though all groups except Alumni selected Critical/Creative/Innovative Thinking as being the most important to include.

New Competencies by Group
(Crucial and Pretty Important)

Legend: Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumni, Industry Reps
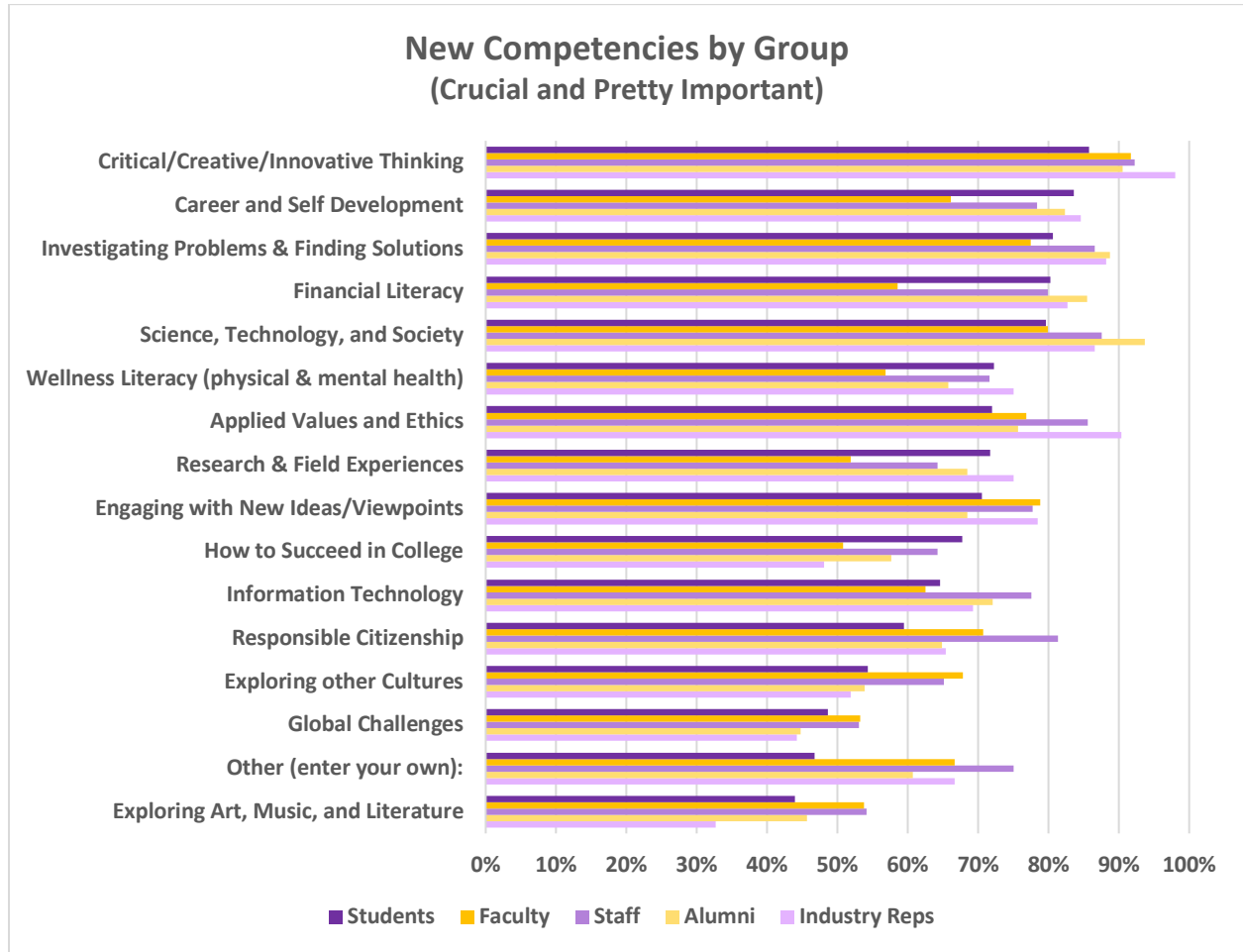
New Skills

Participants were also asked to indicate how important they felt it would be to include a number of new skills into the General Education program. Fifteen options were provided, with one option titled "Other" and allowing respondents to input their own choice into a text box. For this question, a Likert scale was used with answers ranging from "Totally Irrelevant" to "Crucial to Include."

The graph below shows the percentage of respondents that selected either "Crucial to Include" or "Pretty Important" for each competency by identifying group. Answers varied across groups, though all groups except Industry Representatives selected Problem Solving & Critical Thinking as being the most important to include.

Skills to Include by Group
(Crucial and Pretty Important)
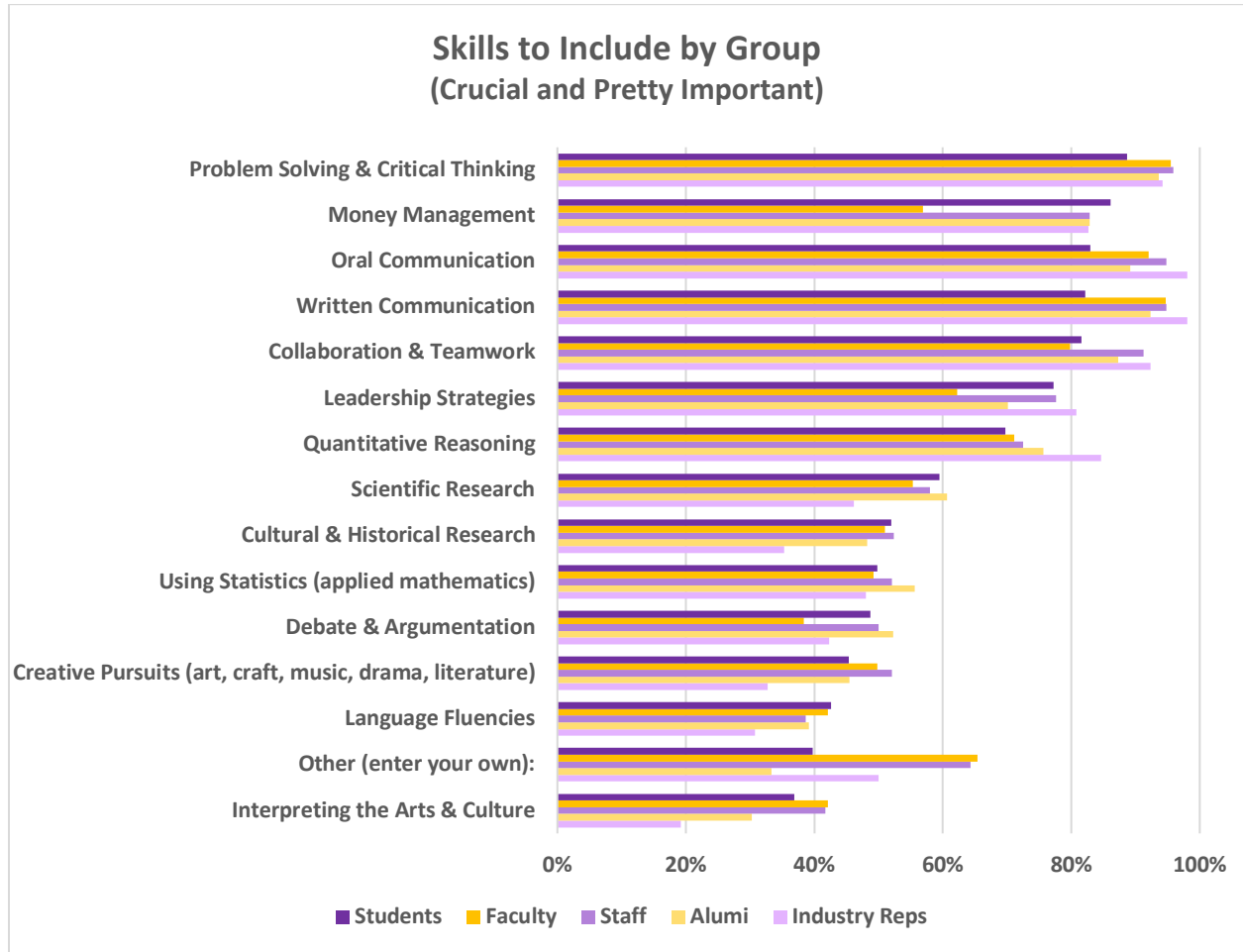
"Other" Responses

Respondents provided a variety of answers in the text boxes provided relevant to Vision Statements, New Competencies, and Skills. Those unfiltered responses are provided below.

Vision Statements/Themes

When selecting and ranking possible General Education vision statements, participants were given an opportunity to select their own vision statement or theme.

Responses that did not respond to prompt given of suggesting their own vision or theme were excluded.

Student Responses
Expanding ideas through art.
No filler classes
Creating pathways for the future
life skills
waste of time and money
America First
Honestly, I do not like any of them; they all sound forced. I would just say something about gaining a base level of knowledge.
American Patriot
Foreign Language
Lifelong Construction
Building Work Experience: internships, networking, etc...
Navigating Tomorrow's Frontiers: Empowering Minds Through Tech Innovation
Learning is a Life-Long Process
"BE THE CHANGE OUR CHILDREN NEED."
Encouraging outside-the-box thinking
Gleaning Excellence in Education for a Balanced Future
Fostering the love of learning
Engineering "Ethics"
All other statements sound too weak or globalist.

Faculty Responses
Preparing Citizens of Tomorrow's World
Reflection
Soil, Plant, Animal, Human Health
A Complete Education
Collaboration and critical thinking
Something like technology focused on improving society, technology serving society

Staff Responses
Engineering the Future
Learning from the Past, Preparing for the Future
Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders With Experience and Confidence

Home Economics classes. Teach some common-sense skills.

Promoting Ethical Leadership and Civic Engagement; Nurturing Digital Literacy and Technological Fluency; Building Foundations for Lifelong Inquiry and Discovery

Promoting Academic Self-Efficacy with Passion

Journey to Excellence

Alumni Responses

Making proud American citizens

Hands on learning experiences from the very beginning

Diversity, equity, and inclusion

New Competencies

When selecting possible competencies to add to the General Education program, participants were given an opportunity to select their own competency.

Responses that did not respond to prompt given of suggesting their own competency were excluded.

Student Responses
How to approach new jobs
Geography
Geography
Peer groups
Understanding risks
Finding any and all ways to do something
emphasis on employable skills
Identifying Fake News
Healthy Lifestyles
Getting involved in the community
Recognizing political bias in the mainstream media and the importance of not conforming to the cries of socialist elitists.
Historical issues impacting us today with no political ideology involved
Communication
Technological Advances
Major designated learning
World languages
Taxes
AOTA
Finance, taxes, budgeting
Crucial for us to take the time
Learning about the arts and experiencing of other cultures that are not your own.
General Maintenance: life/home/car
Exposure of History Regarding One's Identity
Class on How To Do Taxes
Anything to benefit us financially and academically to our majors
math literacy
Geography
Basic Safety and Survival Skills
Learning Skills to be successful in today's world
the basics of different essay formats, instead of just mla
Self-care
Self-reflection and ethics
Adaptive Learning for Disability
Understanding the why and how of complex topics
Fostering healthy debate

Life experiences
"Practical Skills" (carpentry, sewing, emergency aid, taxes, etc.)
Preparing Students for the real world (i.e.: How to do taxes, manage money, etc.)
Making Connections
Social skills
Finishing Construction Class
Bioethics a REQUIREMENT for all premed students
Custom tailor curriculum to student interests and natural propensities vs. making students take general studies
To make sure students are taken care of during their college experience to not have to worry with financials.
Guarding one's mental health
Financial skills and life skills
class on rock music
Life skills (Finding housing, cooking, paying bills, proper care for individual)
HOW TO NOT BE RACIST
Do not make research papers a requirement for general ed or master's programs. Instead, do a community project.
History
Media Literacy
Ethical use of technology and business practices
open-mindedness
Time management and mental health, how to create a schedule where you aren't spending 12 hours a day on school 6 days a week like most STEM students
Financing
Outdoor programs
foreign language learning
The Future of Technology.
how to get your computer to do what you want, i.e. how to organize your files, how to troubleshoot common problems, etc.
Anti-Semitism Education
How to function outside of the school setting.
Tech literacy
Hands-on experience (labs, fieldwork)
Global Workforce
Firearm safety
Exploring Other Ideologies
Help with housing after freshman year
It's very important to get useful skills for your career from general education and/or to get universally applicable skills.
Financial Literacy
Foreign languages
greetings each other and social skills
BLACK HISTORY!!!!!!!

Career-focused classes and technology
An understanding of philosophy and thought
Engaging in your major (i.e. clubs and activities)
History and old literature
Civics Education

Faculty Responses
Exposure to AI
Social Responsibility
math skills
Writing and communication etiquette and skills
sensitivity to other cultures
history
Environmental and Sustainability Issues
Soil, Plant, Animal, Human Health
Some sort of human development course.
Digital Literacy
History and Civics
basic understanding of the biological world
Business Acumen
DEVELOPING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
Communication Skills
History
Ethical Use of Technology
Data Literacy
Reading, Writing, and Speaking
Literacy
speaking another language
Lifespan Development
Understanding People - Human Development & Applications
rhetorical flexibility

Staff Responses
Maturity in the workforce
Streamlining degrees
Professional Communications
Christian Ethics and Values
Day-to-day life DIY
respect and responsibility
Communicating with people with opposing views
Professional Communication
end fascism

Empathy/Social Health
Relationships (Intimate, Friendships, Professional)
morals and manners
Traditional Skills
Common Sense and Home Economics
Interdisciplinary Connections
Organization and Self-Discipline
Professionalism
Soft Skill Development (i.e. Communication, Adaptability, Teamwork, etc.) Top Desired Traits by Employers
Mental Well-being
understanding self-awareness

Alumni Responses

Behavior Management
Writing/Reading Literary
Classroom management
A strong understanding of Civics and American Government
Human science course
Entrepreneurship
Balancing a checkbook
Hands-on work experience starting as a freshman.
Professional and Ethical values and work ethics
I regret my answer now that I see you're open to change. The global citizen of the world was cool.
Personal Finance
Get rid of DEI!
Creating interconnection with other majors
Competitive spirit certifications that are futuristic
Helping one learn how their environment, language, and culture, among other things, influence and help make them who they are as an individual
American government and understanding the US political and legal systems
Career Exploration
Informational Literacy
Challenging Viewpoints - Learning to see outside one's own view
Math
Research writing. I've had grad students who can't even research
Overcoming adversity

Industry Reps

The Industrial Revolution and Its Consequences
Effective Transition from Classroom to Workplace
Keys to future US success and viability

Skills

When selecting possible skills to add to the General Education program, participants were given an opportunity to select their own skill.

Responses that did not respond to prompt given of suggesting their own skill were excluded.

Student Responses
political reasoning
Geography
geography
developing a scientific world worldview
Avoiding groupthink and challenging the mainstream socialist elitists.
Music
How to use technology
requiring any math
math skills
World History
Communication in Digital Media and Digital Literacy
Skills with Digital Communication
Trauma-informed
Exercise and physical health
Body language literacy & empathy
Vibes
Marital relationship training
Health and wellness
The Study of the United States Government, and The Constitution
When one graduates from a four-year STEM institution, they should expect themselves to be well-versed and competent in the scientific method, able to critically think about topics that interest them in their personal lives and that relate to their profession, and able to behave ethically in all things they do that have ecological or societal impact. What one should not expect from a student (especially or perhaps particularly if they graduated with a science or engineering degree) is being well-versed in creative pursuits, being able to interpret arts and culture in a meaningful or abstract way, and fluency in foreign languages. The current general education system is a good diving board into the subjects of humanities, social sciences, and history, but should by no means go into any greater depth than they already do. If a student leaves these classes with an interest, fascination, or otherwise desire to learn more, then they have served their purpose. That is, hopefully, they have inspired the student to pursue the topic in their own time, in a manner that they might find meaningful in their own life. Forcing students that are taking these classes - because they are educationally required to - to learn them in any greater depth is going to cause more harm than good for people that have no more than a passing appreciation for the subject. It would seem that the options listed in this survey are more reflective of a student body that expects a university to teach them everything they need to know about personal responsibility and these listed subjects and skills more than fostering intelligent and curious minds that pursue these things on their own time.
HOW TO NOT BE RACIST
horizontal and vertical communication

Media Literacy
Self-care and healthy living
Everyone should take Spanish with the influx of Hispanic culture in the southeast United States of America
Engineering in Everyday Life
Bias Learning, Diversity Inclusion
Real World Problems
Understanding technology
Ideological Empathy
Understanding of Ethics
How to pay taxes
Life skills
social skills
Critical Race Theory!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
History
Understanding the Constitution and Our Founding Principles

Faculty Responses
Using AI
Ethics
Programming and AI
Programming and AI
Negotiation & Conflict Resolution
Global Education
Being able to have a conversation with someone that does not hold your viewpoints.
Developing a second language
computational thinking
Basic Business Principles
Historical Understanding
understanding and interpreting statistics
Interpreting Scientific Evidence
Ability to interact with viewpoints other than their own
International cooperation
Scientific & Information Literacy
Ability to Positively work with Humans

Staff Responses
Wellbeing of Financial future/investments
treating others and property with respect
Regional History
home economics
Introspection

| Empathy, Civility |
| Overall wellness for now and the future |
| basic civics |

Alumni Responses
Use of technology (hands on)
Self-Discovery
Hands on job and mentors
Honest and ethical values in the workplace
American history
Creative Pursuits as mentioned above (outside of this major)
Independent/home skills (cooking, cleaning, budgeting, etc.,)
Informed citizenship and knowledge of the US government systems and politics
Emotional Intelligence
Basic computer skills
Critical Thinking/Media Literacy