

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs

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March 9, 2015

**Grand Challenge Learning Leadership Committee**

Lauren Goodlad, Office of the Provost and English Department, *Chair*  
John Abelson, Materials Science and Engineering  
Gabrielle Allen, National Center for Supercomputing Applications  
Bertram Bruce, Library and Information Science  
Joe Bradley, College of Engineering  
Laura DeThorne, Speech and Hearing Science  
Samantha Frost, Gender and Women's Studies and Political Science  
Kenneth Importante, Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations  
Kevin Jackson, Accounting  
Frances Kuo, Natural Resources and Environmental Science  
Lowa Mwilambwe, Illini Union  
Jonathan Tomkin, School of Earth, Society, and Environment  
Valeri Werpetski, College of Engineering  
Terri Weissman, Art History  
Gillen Wood, English  
Karen Hyman, Office of the Provost, *ex-officio*  
Staci Provezis, Office of the Provost, *ex-officio*

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of the Grand Challenge Learning Leadership Committee. This Committee is charged to provide crucial oversight and guidance through the early stages (through December 2015) of a three-year pilot in grand challenge learning at the general education level.

**Background:**

The goal of educating students for society's grand challenges was identified as a high priority in the Fall 2013 round of the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education and subsequent Spring 2014 working groups. Their recommendations, set forth in the *Working Group Report* attached to this charge, called for the launching of pilot "tracks" for each theme. Each track would include five distinct forms of high-impact learning organized around a particular grand challenge theme. Three of those components will be piloted in the near future and, thus, come under your committee's charge. These are:

1. An **Illinois first-year experience course** (I-FYE) in the spring semester of the student's first-year in which a diverse cohort of approximately 25 students works under the supervision of a qualified instructor (in potential collaboration with relevant Student Affairs staff) to undertake experiential learning pertinent to one or more grand challenge themes. Such experience-based learning may involve interaction with local, campus, or state communities and/or build on existing campus initiatives in ways that entail students' original thinking and practice. (Time Frame: 1st-generation prototypes Fall 2015; official pilot launch Spring 2016)
2. A second course designed as a **critical framings module** in the fall of the student's second year developed and co-taught by a cross-campus, multidisciplinary team of faculty. This innovative course should help students grasp the structural, systemic, and intellectual challenges relevant to a particular

grand challenge theme (which challenges may be economic, political, cultural, geographic, technological, and/or disciplinary in nature). Faculty members for the module should be drawn from different disciplines, departments, and colleges. Their goal should be to equip students with the means of framing grand challenges at multiple levels and from different perspectives.

The critical framings module for each grand challenge learning track should ideally consist of two distinct kinds of meetings each week: one weekly plenary meeting to collect all students enrolled in the track as well as all faculty co-participants; and one weekly meeting in which students are divided into a number of seminars, each led by a faculty co-participant (ideally to consist of between 19 and 25 students per seminar). In addition to running his/her seminar, each faculty member should contribute one or more presentations at one or more of the plenary meetings (along with a selection of reading materials, viewing materials or practical assignments designed to work in conjunction with the presentation[s]). (Time Frame: Fall 2016 and forward.)

3. An additional component of each course in the track, including the first-year experience and critical framings modules, should entail creative use of **E-portfolios** through (and beyond) these first two stages in the track. E-portfolios should be used in ways that enhance students' critical thinking, communication skills, and professional development while helping them to concretize and integrate learning goals specific to the topic of the grand challenge theme. (Time Frame: Fall 2015 and forward).

**Charge:**

All members of the Grand Challenge Learning Leadership Committee (GCLLC) should familiarize themselves with the Spring 2014 *Working Group Report* on Education for Society's Grand Challenges (Appendix C to this charge) as well as the *First-Round Report* of the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education ([http://provost.illinois.edu/docs/C-CUE\\_FA13\\_Report.pdf](http://provost.illinois.edu/docs/C-CUE_FA13_Report.pdf)).

1. Beginning in Spring 2015, the Grand Challenge Learning Leadership Committee will help to plan, coordinate and implement a Fall 2015 prototype phase of Illinois First-Year Experience courses designed to work with one or more grand challenge topics. This will be followed by a larger group of pilot I-FYES in Spring 2016. To provide this guidance, the GCLLC should answer the various questions articulated in Appendix A to this charge. Your report for this first charge is due on May 7, 2015.
2. Beginning in May 2015 and continuing through December 2015, the Grand Challenge Learning Committee will help to plan the first Critical Framings Module in anticipation of a Fall 2016 launch. In doing so the GCLLC should help the Executive and Advisory Co-Chairs for each grand challenge track to answer the various questions articulated in Appendix B to this charge. Your report for this second charge is due December 11, 2015.

Thank you very much for devoting your time and expertise to this important undergraduate initiative.

Sincerely,



Ilesanmi Adesida  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

c: C. L. Tucker  
K. Kuntz  
S. Altaner