To: UCC

From: Marian Bleeke, Director of General Education

Date: November 15, 2018

RE: Capstone Criteria Revisions

**Background:** Cleveland State instituted the requirement of a Capstone Experience for all undergraduate students in 2008 as part of the Gen Ed 08 program. The report outlining Gen Ed 08 states following about the capstone:

The capstone experience represents the culmination of a student’s learning in her or his discipline and a drawing together of the various aspects of her or his educational experiences. The purpose of a capstone is both to integrate the diverse and sometimes disparate knowledge acquired in the degree program and to provide an opportunity for students to synthesize their learning through a vehicle that allows them to see beyond their undergraduate degree.

Definition of the capstone experience:

* Major programs of study must include capstone courses/experiences.
* Credits for the capstone course/experience should be part of the major requirements.
* The capstone should be a culminating course/experience in which students integrate concepts and information learned in their major and in their other general education courses. Approved capstone experiences must help students achieve at least **three** of the six general education skills (writing, quantitative literacy, critical thinking, information literacy, oral communication, working in groups). Capstone courses may be used to satisfy a WAC or SPAC requirement. Examples of appropriate capstone courses/experiences could be laboratory or literature research, creative writing, design and production, performance, internships, or clinical experiences.
* The capstone course/experience must result in some form of summation, closing project, or final product that brings scholarly reflection about the experience.

However, the current criteria used for approval of capstones do not fully reflect these expectations. The current criteria require only that the capstone 1) be part of the credit hours for the major and 2) promote three of the six skill areas. Therefore, this proposal outlines new criteria for the approval of capstones in order to fully implement the requirement as originally intended.

**Proposed new criteria for capstones**

The capstone should:

1. Be offered as part of the credits included in a student’s major requirements.
2. Be offered at the 400-level and ordinarily be taken during a student’s final year and after completion of a majority of the requirements for the major.
3. Require students to integrate, synthesize, and/or apply knowledge and skills already gained across multiple courses (including both courses for the major and General Education courses).
4. Require students to demonstrate mastery of at least three of the General Education skill areas (critical thinking, group work, information literacy, oral communication, quantitative literacy, writing).
5. Require students to produce some form of summation, closing project, or final product.
6. Prompt students to reflect on their undergraduate experience and/or support students in transitioning from college into their career or further study.

**Other considerations for capstones:**

It is expected that capstones will vary between programs, departments, and colleges. As long as they meet the criteria given above, capstones may include courses, theses, research projects, creative products, internships, fieldwork, and other forms.

Programs with smaller enrollments are encouraged to collaborate on interdisciplinary capstones.

**Review and Recertification of Capstones**: Following the approval of the new criteria given above, all existing capstones will need to be submitted to UCC for review and recertification. The 2017 report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on General Education recommended that all General Education courses go through review and recertification on a regular basis. This review will be a first step in that direction.