Revitalizing the Role of the Humanities in General Education

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CORNERSTONE
Learning for Living





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The Purpose of this Toolkit

At many institutions of higher education, the humanities have been languishing, with declining numbers of students choosing humanities majors and declining enrollments by non-majors in history, philosophy, literature and language courses. The impact on a society that devalues a liberal education is a frightening one. It raises a specter of generations of adults who have lost their sense of the past, their civic responsibilities, and any shared vision for the future.

How might this trend be reversed? How can the humanities become once again the center of higher education, revered and valued, the very roots from which all other intellectual explorations arise?

The future health of the humanities lies in general education.

The future health of the humanities lies in general education. These courses should be the foundation of any education, regardless of students' major or professional aspirations. General education is where students have the opportunity to cultivate the skills and dispositions associated with humanistic inquiry—strong communication and analytical skills along with the intellectual agility to navigate a variety of perspectives—that are essential for democratic participation and effective citizenship.

In September 2020, the Teagle Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities launched the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative to revitalize the role of the humanities in general education. The initiative is inspired by a successful model developed by Purdue University to make the humanities an integral aspect of a coherent general education program. Within the first four years following the launch of the Cornerstone Integrated Liberal Arts certificate program in 2018, Purdue's College of Liberal Arts reversed its decline in credit hours, raised morale and teaching opportunities for participating faculty, and heightened its status and visibility. Even the pandemic could not slow the College of Liberal Arts' momentum: enrollments in the first-year sequence for the certificate swelled by an astonishing 79 percent from fall 2020 to fall 2021, from 2280 students to 4080 students.

This toolkit shares lessons learned from Purdue's experience to serve as a guide for adapting the program model at institutions committed to reinvigorating the role of the humanities in general education. As more institutions join the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative, this toolkit is periodically updated to capture lessons from a broader array of participants. As of Fall 2025, 85 institutions are participating in the initiative in the planning or implementation phases. This toolkit has helped these institutions work through the nascent stages of their projects, which aim to expose students to the power of the humanities; strengthen the coherence of general education; and increase teaching opportunities for humanities faculty committed to

helping students achieve a sense of belonging and community.

The toolkit offers practical strategies for faculty leaders to engage their colleagues, secure administrative and faculty buy-in, attract students, and plan for the longer-term sustainability of their program. It draws from an in-depth case study of Purdue's experience, as well as from other funded projects that have used different approaches and curricular formats in alignment with their institutional strengths and priorities. All involve a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for entering students and coherent pathways through general education that help students connect the humanities to their professional aspirations.

We hope this toolkit sparks constructive conversation on your campus about adapting the Cornerstone program model and making the difficult work of curricular reform more manageable. Faculty leaders interested in adapting the Cornerstone approach to general education at their campuses should reflect on the guiding questions that follow.

1. How will you engage faculty colleagues to ensure the program has longevity and can be delivered at sufficient scale?

2. How will you build faculty consensus around transformative texts as part of fostering a common intellectual experience for students at the outset of their undergraduate experience? How can such texts reflect variety in terms of authorship, era, geography, and genre?

3. How will you prepare faculty with various areas of specialization to teach in a general education program with students from a range of backgrounds, lived experience, and professional aspirations for their post-college careers?

4. How will your program be structured to reach a significant proportion of your undergraduate student body? Will it involve components that are required for all students or meet general education distribution requirements? Will it be set up with an incentive of some kind (e.g., certificate) to attract students?

5. How will you engage administrators to ensure the program is financially sustainable and supported across the institution?

6. Will your program necessitate approval of new curricular structures (e.g., approval for mandatory first-year seminars)? What considerations must be addressed as a matter of academic governance at your institution (or at the state level for public institutions) for your program to launch?

7. What other constituents should you be thinking about given your campus context to ensure the health of your program (e.g., professional academic advisors at large institutions)? What partnerships could you establish to raise the visibility of your program to students?

Purdue's Experience with the Cornerstone Approach

The Cornerstone Integrated Liberal Arts program at Purdue University (henceforth, Purdue Cornerstone) is designed as a 15-credit hour certificate. It begins with an enriched first-year experience anchored in transformative texts, followed by a pathway through which students can fulfill two-thirds of their general education requirements as they earn the Cornerstone certificate by completing Liberal Arts classes. The program is designed to fit into every degree program offered at Purdue. It has long been required for graduation from its polytechnic institute and serves as one the pillars of the undergraduate program at Purdue's newly launched business school.

Transformative texts are works of literature and philosophy that have transformed the world and continue to transform individual lives. They are wide-ranging in terms of authorship, era, and geographic origin.

Students who embark on the Purdue Cornerstone certificate take a two-semester sequence in their first year in which they read powerful and influential works of literature and philosophy that have transformed the world and continue to have the power to transform individual lives. These works are wide-ranging in terms of authorship, era, and geographic origin: from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Homer, and Plato to Shakespeare, Thomas Jefferson, Edmund Burke, Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Hannah Arendt, Eileen Chang, James Baldwin, Octavia Butler, and Chinua Achebe, among others. At least half the reading assignments in all sections of this sequence are drawn from a faculty-created list of major texts and authors—with a resulting degree of commonality that helps create a sense of belonging and intellectual community for students. These two courses fulfill three of Purdue's core requirements: oral communication, written communication, and information literacy.

The gateway sequence for the certificate engages college students with significant texts under the mentorship of Liberal Arts faculty, strengthening their creative thinking and communication skills, challenging them to grapple with big questions, and seeing their degree program, whether computer science or aviation technology, through a wider lens. This gateway sequence creates a common intellectual experience—where first-year students read a set of texts in common with their peers, building community not only among students taking the course but also among the faculty who are teaching them.

Purdue also identified thematically related clusters (e.g., "Technology and Society") of new or existing general education courses that help students confront technical issues from humanistic perspectives while meeting existing distribution requirements. Students who complete the gateway sequence and three upper-level

courses earn a certificate that goes on their transcript with no detour away from timely degree completion. These courses—under such topics as "Healthcare and Medicine" and "Science and Technology"—complement the STEM, management, and health sciences majors. The topics are designed to appeal to STEM and pre-professional students, who now dominate undergraduate enrollment at many institutions. They are intended to help them appreciate that seemingly technical problems cannot always be addressed exclusively through technical solutions. The courses also provide a purposeful and coherent path for completing their general education requirements.

For example, engineering students can take coursework on the scientific impact of the Italian Renaissance, the philosophy of science, and constitutional law undergirding the regulatory framework for technology in American society. Nursing and pharmacy students can take courses on biomedical ethics, global perspectives on health, and the history of medicine and public health. Majors in business administration are offered courses on communicating in the global workplace, the history of capitalism, or the sociology of developing nations. See the Purdue Cornerstone Plan of Study (Appendix A) for a complete list of all the courses in each theme.

There are various curricular formats that institutions could use to adapt the Cornerstone approach that engage students with transformative texts in the first year and have the potential to reach a significant share of the undergraduate student body.

This program offers undergraduates, particularly STEM majors, the opportunity to hone core communication and analytical skills while gaining a broad-based understanding of the world. It also gives them a purposeful path for fulfilling general education requirements. In this respect, the Purdue Cornerstone curriculum functions as a "core within the core." The Purdue Cornerstone certificate is noted on students' transcripts to incentivize them to pursue this path for fulfilling general education requirements. The program model's two principal components are:

1. Gateway courses in which first-year students engage transformative texts

2. A purposeful pathway through which students can complete most or all of their general education requirements and link the humanities to their professional aspirations.

There are a variety of ways colleges and universities could structure such a program, including mandatory first-year seminars for incoming students coupled with intensive advising to develop tailored pathways through general education; integrating transformative texts into existing courses that meet distribution requirements; or most ambitiously, using transformative texts and questions as a unifying mechanism to develop a coherent general education program for all students. All of these curricular formats involve engaging students with transformative texts in the first year and have the potential to reach a significant share of the undergraduate student body. It is equally important to carve out a

method by which students can continue to take courses in the humanities beyond the first year. Thematic pathways which complement a range of degree programs at your university or college is one method, whereby students can fulfill their general education requirements, hone their communication skills and broaden their perspectives.

CREATING A GATEWAY EXPERIENCE THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE TEXTS

Gateway courses anchored in transformative texts are key to a successful program that will truly encourage students to appreciate the humanities and social sciences and enroll in additional coursework in the Liberal Arts.

These gateway courses should also be designed to be attractive teaching opportunities for faculty in the humanities and social sciences. At Purdue, Liberal Arts faculty—from the sociologist to the musicologist—teach the texts that they wish to teach, often the very books that inspired them to pursue a life of learning. The readings they choose—whether fiction, poetry, great speeches, novels, philosophical and scientific texts—provide the foundation on which faculty teach basic communication and research skills.

Purdue's new gateway sequence consist of two 100 level courses:

- **SCLA 101 Transformative Texts, Critical Thinking and Communication I: Antiquity to Modernity** (*emphasizes Written Communication and Information Literacy)*
- **SCLA 102 Transformative Texts, Critical Thinking and Communication II: Modern World** (*emphasizes Oral Communication)*

While both courses stress critical reading skills and oral and written communication, the first half of the sequence places a special emphasis on writing instruction and information literacy, and the second half focuses more on public speaking. Nonetheless, the full-year sequence keeps students reading, writing, researching, discussing, and presenting throughout the course.

These classes also emphasize mentorship, giving first-year students across the campus a meaningful experience with a full-time faculty member, someone who could guide them, foster their talents and interests, and continue to be a resource throughout their college career. Cornerstone faculty are also trained to handle students in crisis. The goal is to introduce students to an adult on campus to whom they can turn for any reason.

Purdue's Transformative Texts sequence places Liberal Arts faculty in classrooms filled with mostly STEM students—students who they might otherwise never teach. These courses act as an onramp to the Liberal Arts in which faculty can attract these students to take their next course or even minor or major in their discipline. Since launching the program in Fall 2017, over 10,000 students have taken the first-year Transformative Texts sequence.

Making these courses both intellectually and pedagogically appealing for faculty is not difficult. At Purdue, faculty teaching Transformative Texts often select their readings around a concept, such as Citizenship, Friendship, Solitude, Utopia/Dystopia, the Supernatural, or Gods and Heroes. Faculty point students to the beauty, poignancy, and the wisdom of words and ideas. They challenge them. They make them think about themselves and others. And they do so while reinforcing students' ability to express themselves, listen to others, and inspire others to listen to them. Transformative Texts seeks to enrich the minds and the lives of Purdue students and instill a love of learning and all its related virtues: empathy, perspective, knowledge, and joy.

Transformative Texts provides first-year students across the campus with a shared intellectual experience. Additionally, it cultivates community among faculty across disciplines, allowing them the opportunity to collaborate outside their departments and to discuss how to strengthen undergraduate teaching.

Purdue faculty take their students to theatrical performances, galleries and museums, hold film fests and fiction writing contests, making art, opera, film and theater part of their experience in Transformative Texts. The creativity of the faculty and the students in Transformative Texts has been extraordinary. Students hold political debates and make Shark-tank product pitches. Students design video games based on Dante's *Inferno*; graphic illustrations of Gwendolyn Brooks' poetry; modernized versions of *Antigone*; photographic essays on Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale;" short stories in the style of the Tang dynasty tales; and poetry imitating Edgar Allen Poe. The faculty, unbridled by their discipline, have found new ways to get students reading, speaking, listening, writing and even performing.

Faculty as well as students might be reading *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng'en, *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville, *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf, or *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez for the first time. But this is never a drawback—rather an opportunity for collaborative learning. And it offers the excitement that always accompanies discovering something new and majestic.

Lessons Learned

The sections that follow distill key takeaways for campuses interested in developing programs as part of the Cornerstone initiative. The goal of this program is to provide students with a gateway experience anchored in transformative texts and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations. Successful implementation and longer-term sustainability will depend on fostering faculty leadership and buy-in; engendering support from senior administrators; creating a common intellectual experience that encourages student identification with the program; and raising the visibility of your program to a range of campus constituents.

Your program should be faculty developed and driven.

CREATING FACULTY BUY-IN

Your program should be faculty developed and driven. Why should your colleagues be interested in joining such a program?

1. **Outreach**. Teaching gateway courses like Transformative Texts allows your faculty the opportunity to reach first-year students from across your campus, particularly those in STEM or business disciplines. Your faculty can inspire these students to enroll in their departmental courses or even minor or major in their discipline.

2. **Mission**. Faculty want to be part of the solution, revitalizing the humanities, increasing their visibility, and helping your institution provide all students with an enriched first-year experience.

3. **Collegiality**. It brings them out of their departments to discuss teaching and mentoring in an interdisciplinary environment.

The success of your program depends on faculty participation. Incentives such as stipends for preparing to teach your gateway courses help but there are other equally important, if less tangible, benefits. At Purdue, what Liberal Arts faculty enjoy most about the program is the camaraderie and fellowship it fosters, allowing the sociologist and the political scientist, the classicist and the philosopher, an opportunity to meet and talk about books, teaching, and students.

Creating such a program also provides your faculty the opportunity to solve the most pressing problem plaguing the humanities (as well as the social sciences and interdisciplinary programs): declining enrollments. Your faculty have invested their lives in perpetuating liberal learning. They want to be part of the solution but are

rarely given the opportunity to do so. This program gives them the ability to bring students into their discipline, raise the status and visibility of your college, and work across disciplinary boundaries.

These gateway courses recruit students, which is particularly vital for instructors having trouble attracting students to their courses simply because students do not understand what they are teaching or why it is important. Students who encounter an inspiring teacher at the outset of their college career will continue taking classes with that instructor.

These gateway courses give your faculty the freedom to be dynamic and creative teachers, designing enriching experiences for young adults and putting together various media that bring alive the great ideas of the past and the grand challenges of the present.

Finally, this is also a chance to build bridges, to reach out and collaborate with colleagues across campus, particularly in the STEM disciplines. In short, it brings the campus together with one mission in mind: advancing the education of undergraduates.

Administrators want solutions.

LEVERAGING ADMINISTRATIVE BUY-IN

To build a successful program, one that becomes engrained in your college culture, support from your administration is vital. At Purdue, David A. Reingold, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, initiated the development of an integrated liberal arts program to change the way the College delivered general education requirements and to establish an outreach program to STEM students that would bring them into Liberal Arts classrooms. Before Purdue Cornerstone was created, President Mitchell Daniels spoke publicly encouraging more Purdue students to enroll in history, literature, and philosophy courses.

Clearly, administrators want solutions. Your program is a solution. It has the potential to reverse declining enrollments in the humanities, re-energize your faculty, break down the disciplinary differences, bring disparate parts of your campus together in a shared mission, and above all, enrich your students' lives, refine their skills, and inspire their minds. Far-sighted administrators who also want the best for their institution and students will understand these lofty but by no means unrealistic goals.

Reaching out to administrators in other parts of your campus is equally important. Purdue Cornerstone was developed in dialogue with deans, faculty and advisors in the colleges of Engineering, Science, Management, and Technology (Purdue Polytechnic Institute), in addition to the College of Liberal Arts. For example, it was a faculty member in Engineering who suggested Purdue Cornerstone build a "community of learning" and hold annual dinners for administrators and faculty

across the campus to learn about Cornerstone; it was an administrator in Civil Engineering who suggested the subtitle of the Transformative Texts courses: "Critical Thinking and Communication." From the outset, they were brought into the conceptualization of the program and have remained involved. They are invested in the success of the program.

HOW THE PROGRAM WAS ROLLED OUT AT PURDUE

Following upon the work of a committee of department heads appointed by Dean David A. Reingold, the inaugural director, Melinda Zook, Professor of History, was charged with creating an integrated Liberal Arts program in 2016. That spring and summer, she reached out to administrators and faculty in Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, Technology, Science, Management, Health Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine. Sometimes she was given the names of likely STEM allies and sometimes she simply emailed them cold. With a few exceptions, most met with her. Her goal was to listen, asking them, what gaps they saw in their students' foundational knowledge and skills? How could the Liberal Arts better educate their students and help prepare them for their future careers? Across the board, they pointed to the students' weak communication skills and their lack of knowledge about the wider world. These conversations informed early plans for the new program. She had designed the pyramid shape of the program with the three Levels, placing 200, 300 and 400 level Liberal Arts courses in the Themes suggested by Dean Reingold. What impressed her STEM colleagues was the purposeful pathway it gave their students to fulfill their general education requirements.

In the summer, Professor Zook enlisted the help of other Liberal Arts colleagues to lay the groundwork for the first-year Transformative Texts sequence that was guided through the curricular process in AY 2016-17 (Christopher Lukasik, Associate Professor of English; Kim Gallon, Assistant Professor of History; Yvonne Pitts, Associate of History; Jeffrey Turco, Associate Professor of German; Patrick Kain; Associate Professor of Philosophy, Molly Scudder, Assistant Professor of Political Science, and Antonia Syson, Associate Professor of Classics). Dean Reingold offered each a stipend for one year (AY 2016-17) to help design the new gateway sequence. The working group created the learning outcomes and objectives for the courses in alignment with Purdue's University Core Curriculum and the initial List of Authors and Texts from which faculty would choose at least 50% of their readings. They also created sample syllabi and spent considerable time discussing the best practices for the teaching of oral and written communication. They were aided by instructors from Purdue's Center for Instructional Excellence as well as faculty in the Brian Lamb School of Communication and the Purdue Writing Lab. Naturally, creating such a List has the potential for controversy. Where the working group of faculty

lacked expertise, they consulted their colleagues, particularly in Native American, African and Asian literature and philosophy. The List of Authors and Titles is a living document and revised annually.

Currently, the Cornerstone Steering Committee evaluates new authors nominated by faculty members once a year. The criteria they use to judge is simple: is this an author whose work is truly transformative ("original, unexpected, and innovative," in the words of Italo Calvino)? Is it inspiring and accessible to incoming first-year students?

The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education helped guide both the certificate and the Transformative Texts sequence through the curricular process at the College and University level. As a state university, it was also vetted by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. The program was approved in April 2017.

In addition to securing approval for the certificate, the Transformative Texts courses were submitted for consideration as alternatives to fulfill University Core Curriculum competencies in oral and written communication and information literacy. This component of the approval process enabled broader enrollment and positioned the certificate as a genuine path to complete core requirements.

Even with all of these approvals complete, a next step to enable adoption of the Transformative Texts courses was to work in partnership the colleagues across campus to update their plans of study to include them as options. The Dean worked extensively with other campus academic deans to advance the program. Both the Director and the Senior Associate Dean collaborated with campus colleagues to spur these changes and then to communicate those changes among University staff and campus academic advisors.

RAISING THE PROGRAM'S VISIBILITY ON CAMPUS

At Purdue, communicating the importance of Cornerstone began at the outset. In 2017, the Marketing and Communications team in the Liberal Arts Dean's Office developed the Cornerstone brand and laid the foundation to promote the program on campus and beyond. This included the development of all Purdue Cornerstone-related flyers, banners, advertising, giveaways, etc. to raise awareness of the program. Subsequent events and collateral materials were designed by the Marketing and Communications team in support of the program. The College of Liberal Arts began to sponsor a series of events aimed at faculty, academic advisors, students and parents. Behind the scenes, the Dean of the College, the Director, and administrators from the College of Liberal Arts continued to meet with Deans, faculty, administrators, and advisors across the campus, particularly with those colleges yet to embrace the Transformative Text course options.

To assist with managing the logistics of Cornerstone, a full-time academic program manager was hired in 2018. The College's schedule deputy works with that staff member to build the academic schedule for the growing number of sections offered.

In August 2018 Purdue Cornerstone held the first annual Community of Learning Dinner for representatives of the higher administration as well as Deans of colleges and administrative units such as Admissions, Residential Life, Convocations, Galleries and Libraries, and local large employers (particularly, GE and Subaru). These dinners were about apprising everyone on new program developments and having Cornerstone faculty mingle with individuals from across the campus, extolling the virtues of Transformative Texts and the Liberal Arts more generally.



Taylor Sinicropi
Major in Computer Information Technology, Purdue Polytechnic Institute. Winner of the Frankenstein/AI fiction writing contest for her short story, "The Miracle." Photo Courtesy of Purdue University.

Reaching out to other units on campus and working with them on either short-term projects or to build long-term partnerships has been vital to Purdue Cornerstone's success. Among the most enriching relationships for Cornerstone faculty and students have been with Purdue Convocations for the Performing Arts. In 2018, Convocations brought a theatrical production of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to campus. They provided all Transformative Texts students reading *Frankenstein* free copies of the book as well as discounted tickets to the show. In return, Cornerstone faculty brought their students to see the show and gave a pre-performance lecture. This has been a winning partnership for both Cornerstone and Convocations. In AY 2022-2023, Purdue Convocations organized film screenings or theatrical productions based on *Pride and Prejudice*, *A Doll's House*, and *Julius Ceasar*, all common texts assigned in the first-year sequence. Each event attracted at least 700-800 students taking the first-year Transformative Texts sequence.

Other units on campus have worked with Cornerstone on special projects. The Center for Brain-Inspired Computing funded a short-story contest on *Frankenstein* and AI in 2018. C-SPAN Archives works with faculty who want videos of historic speeches for their Transformative Texts sections. Both the Writing Lab and the Presentation Center have helped Cornerstone develop its instructional materials. Film and Video Studies has held evening film fests for Cornerstone students.

Such partnerships are important for any program. Big campuses are often like small cities, with so many different departments, centers, and programs that it is difficult for any student (or faculty member) to take advantage of all the opportunities available. Working with different areas of the campus has significantly benefitted Cornerstone faculty and students. These campus units learned about Cornerstone and Cornerstone faculty learned about them. They attained access to large numbers of undergraduates, and in return, can provide them with unique opportunities (e.g., private gallery showings, free books, funding for contests, etc.). These are winning relationships that will help build and ensure the health of your program.

FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY:

- In November 2017, as the program was being piloted, the program steering committee organized a conference on “Reviving the Liberal Arts” for faculty and graduate students from Purdue and regional campuses, featuring keynote speakers, workshops taught by Cornerstone faculty, and information on the Cornerstone Integrated Liberal Arts program for everyone in attendance.
- In December 2018, the College of Liberal Arts sponsored a luncheon for every academic advisor across campus. Then-President Mitchell Daniels addressed the participants and an artist entertained everyone on what advice Shakespeare would give students. The advisors were also given fliers and thumb-drives with information about the program. Similar lunches have been held in the following years to advance awareness of the Purdue Cornerstone courses among advisers to ensure this important constituency remains engaged despite inevitable turnover in the staffing ranks.

FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

- Fall pizza parties for students about spring registration
- Digital ads, created by the Marketing and Communications team and run as a campus geofence during the summer new beginner registration program
- An event-specific Snapchat filter was created by the Marketing and Communications team for promotion on campus.
- Flyers provided to Colleges across the campus, Residential Life, and all academic advisors for distribution during summer registration
- Display cases in various halls featuring Cornerstone
- Through the Marketing and Communications team, articles on Cornerstone were published in the student newspaper, the THiNK Magazine (a publication of the College of Liberal Arts), and through the Purdue Alumnus magazine
- Social media promotion (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram)
- Cornerstone promotional materials for students: stress balls, pens, tech tattoos and t-shirts
- Cornerstone information table at campus fairs
- Cornerstone promotional materials and flyers for recruitment at Indiana High Schools
- Cornerstone video featuring interviews with current students; currently found on our webpage but also on YouTube
- A series of events held around common works assigned in the Transformative Texts sequence, such as theatrical productions, special pre-performance lectures, fiction writing contests, and film screenings.

- A brunch with all academic advisors across campus wherein students talked about the program
- Free Cornerstone t-shirts for every student in Transformative Texts
- Cornerstone faculty also began working with the university-level admissions office every spring on “Diversity Day,” a weekend visit program for underrepresented minority students who have been admitted to Purdue.

PREPARING FACULTY AND SCALING UP

In the pilot phase, Cornerstone offered six sections of SCLA 101 (Transformative Texts I) in fall 2017 and four sections of SCLA 102 (Transformative Texts II) in spring 2018. By fall 2018, all 33 sections of Transformative Texts filled with 997 students, seeking to fulfill their oral and written communication requirements. In Fall 2024, Purdue is projected to offer over 175 sections of Transformative Texts and enrolling over 5,000 incoming undergraduate students.



The second Academic Advisors’ Lunch in 2019. Three students who had taken Transformative Texts talked to the advisors about how the courses helped them grow. Photo courtesy of Purdue University.

In the pilot phase, Purdue Cornerstone was not yet on any plans of study throughout the university and had to assure academic advisors that the courses were accepted on the University Core Curriculum and their students would receive credit for Written Communication or Oral Communication.

In AY 2017-18, the Director recruited and prepared more Liberal Arts faculty to teach Transformative Texts and this process has continued ever since. As the program grew in visibility, faculty themselves asked to join. So as not to burden the faculty, they were allowed to pick when and how many sections they would teach per semester working in conjunction with their academic unit.

In 2018, Purdue Cornerstone hired three Visiting Assistant Professors from a nearby Liberal Arts college that had closed. That institution had a core similar to Transformative Texts. Those three instructors each began teaching four sections of Transformative Texts per semester. In 2020, their visiting faculty lines were converted to teaching professor positions.

In 2019, Dean Reingold mandated that virtually all new tenure track faculty hires in the College of Liberal Arts would fulfill 50% of their teaching obligations in Purdue Cornerstone. The opportunity to teach in Cornerstone became part of Purdue's attraction in faculty recruitment.

Faculty joining Cornerstone are given a stipend for one semester. During that fellowship semester, they attend meetings and workshops to help prepare them to teach Transformative Texts.

Three meetings are designed to onboard new cohorts of faculty joining the program:

Meeting 1: Introduction. Led by the Director, this meeting focuses on the program as a whole (origins, goals, and current developments); then more generally about what to expect when teaching incoming STEM students, the resources available to faculty, how to choose readings. Much of the time is spent discussing best teaching practices.

Meeting 2: SCLA 101. Led by a Purdue Cornerstone faculty member who teaches SCLA 101, this meeting focuses on the first half of Transformative Texts. Their syllabus is distributed, and they discuss how they designed it, the readings they chose, and the assignments they use to meet the learning outcomes.

Meeting 3: SCLA 102. This meeting serves the same purpose as the second meeting, only it is led by a Purdue Cornerstone faculty member who teaches SCLA 102, the second half of Transformative Texts.

In addition, three workshops for all Purdue Cornerstone faculty who wish to participate are held every semester. The **"How I Teach This Text"** workshops are led by a Purdue Cornerstone faculty member who wishes to discuss their experiences teaching a particular text, such as Thoreau's *Walden* or the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*.

All these workshops and meetings emphasize community and fellowship, seeking to break down the barriers between the disciplines around a common goal: good teaching practices. Breakfast or lunch is served. With more faculty joining the program, Purdue was able to continue to offer more sections of Transformative Texts.

ENROLLMENTS IN TRANSFORMATIVE TEXTS: SCLA 101 AND SCLA 102

	Number of sections: SCLA 101	Number of sections: SCLA 102	Total Enrollment
Fall 2017	6	0	100
Spring 2018	0	4	64
Fall 2018	20	13	990
Spring 2019	13	20	990
Fall 2019	39	23	1869
Spring 2020	29	30	1710
Fall 2020	41	35	2280
Spring 2021	34	33	2010
Fall 2021	72	64	4080
Spring 2022	59	70	3870
Fall 2022	67	57	3720
Spring 2023	57	62	3570
Fall 2023	68	62	3900
Spring 2024	65	63	3840
Fall 2024	103	74	5310
Spring 2025	80	82	4860
Fall 2025	89	89	5315

Note: from fall 2024 onward, numbers reflect enrollments in Cornerstone sections offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Daniels School of Business at Purdue University's flagship West Lafayette campus and at its Indianapolis campus.

The *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* Movement

As of fall 2025, 85 institutions around the country are participating in the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative in the planning or implementation phases. Of those campuses carrying out full implementation, over 40 percent are minority-serving institutions, community colleges, or institutions located in rural areas, highlighting how the program model serves students of all backgrounds.

As the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative matures, we have observed three common tactics used by the implementation grantees to establish a "gateway" course in which students build intellectual community around a shared set of texts:

- Create a new course requirement for undergraduates, with the necessary institution-wide governance approvals that entails. For example, Stanford University established its COLLEGE requirement, a sequence of seminars organized around common readings, for incoming first-year students after a multi-year planning and curricular approval process. Vanderbilt University also

recently passed a required two-semester sequence organized around common readings that is required of its incoming first-year students. Similarly, Onondaga Community College, part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system, launched a student success course called Introduction to Liberal Arts 101 that is required of all incoming students in the liberal arts associate degree program (the course also meets the SUNY system-wide general education requirement for coursework in Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice). The course is organized around four enduring questions, with a mix of Western and non-Western texts assigned in common to explore each question. Even with the necessary curricular approvals in place, scaling a new course required of students takes time due to staffing challenges to ensure the new requirement can be taught in load by tenure-track faculty who have other teaching obligations to their home departments.

- Create a new elective that meets an existing general education requirement. This usually involves getting curricular approval by the general education committee rather than the institution's academic senate, depending on how governance is handled at the institution, but securing the necessary approval can still be a challenging and time-consuming process. For example, Purdue University, Austin Community College, Colorado State University, and Fort Lewis College launched alternative means of meeting their institutions first-year requirements through courses anchored in core texts that cultivate a common conversation. Each campus secured the necessary curricular approvals for their new electives prior to the implementation request and have used implementation grant support to staff and scale course sections to engage a meaningful share of their incoming class. Again, this tactic is complex for sustainability in the post-grant period as project leaders need to think through how to staff the new course so it is taught in load by full-time faculty who have obligations to their home departments.

- Adapt an existing first-year course requirement (e.g., first-year composition, first-year seminar) rather than standing up a new elective or passing a new requirement. The existing course already has a staffing structure so it can be delivered on a regular schedule to meet the needs of incoming students. The work of the implementation grant is not so much to recruit or incentivize tenure-track faculty to teach a new course as much as to prepare and support existing faculty to teach the redesigned course and ensure the campus is committed to ongoing faculty professional development around teaching with a shared set of texts in the post-grant period. For example, Dillard University and Norfolk State University are targeting their first-year English composition sequence; Clark Atlanta University and American University are targeting their first-year seminar; and Rochester Institute of Technology is targeting its speech course.

All implementation grantees generate a common list of transformative texts and set a policy for how the list will be used in their "gateway" courses aimed at incoming students. For most grantees, the common reading list spans 75-150 works and the usual expectation is that instructors leading sections in the gateway course will select 50-75 percent of their reading assignments from the common list. Some campuses (e.g., Catholic University of America, Thomas Jefferson University) have determined they will have 1-2 "pre-selected" readings for each unit/week of their gateway course to be taught in common across all sections, with the instructor expected to have 75 percent of the readings they select to come from their campuses' common lists. Yet another variation is having a subset of sections share a uniform syllabus. For example, American University has a seminar required of all incoming first-year and transfer students and runs as many as 150 sections annually. With grant support, they developed a subset of seminar sections with a common syllabus to explore "The Examined Life." The model has been so successful that is being extended to new subsets of seminars sharing common syllabi on "The Making of Scientific Change" and "Imagining the Good Life."

Campuses that recruit significant numbers of transfer students have designed their "gateway" course to accommodate both native and transfer students. For instance, at Lehman College, a senior college in the City University of New York, 70 percent of its incoming class are transfer students from community colleges. Lehman is redesigning a series of 300-level seminars required of all rising juniors (both native and transfer) to create a common intellectual experience; these seminars in turn serve as the building block for a new interdisciplinary minor. As another example, University of Wisconsin-Platteville is adapting an existing composition course required of all incoming first-year students and also is creating a new "Introduction to Humanities" elective that may be taken by transfer students or by students who might come to the program after the first year; either option serves as the building block for their certificate in the Helios Program for Integrated Liberal Arts.

Common tactics used by implementation grantees to create "pathways" through general education include the following:

- Create a certificate and/or minor designed that encourage students to complete a thematic cluster of general education courses and pursue coursework in the humanities. For example, Norfolk State University is launching a 21-credit certificate in African-American Studies structured as follows: students participate in designated sections of the two-semester English composition sequence required of all students and then choose to follow one of three concentrations (e.g., race, gender, and sexuality). Each cluster has a mix of general education and humanities electives. While students may complete general education distribution requirements within each cluster, they are also incentivized to go beyond the minimum of 14 credits in the humanities that is required of all

students. Other campuses (e.g., Tuskegee University, Fort Lewis College) have designed their certificates so they can be completed by the end of the first year to provide students with a sense of academic momentum and encourage them to persist to the sophomore year. Still others are building thematic clusters of courses but are choosing not to badge them with certificates. For example, Thomas Jefferson University has clusters of courses (e.g., sustainability, aesthetics and material culture), with each cluster satisfying all general education distribution requirements.

- Create a core text "stream" to meet general education distribution requirements. For example, Clemson University has five-course Humanities Seminar Track that enables students to fulfill general education requirements and earn a minor. Onondaga Community College has a strand of "Enduring Questions" courses that students can take as a pathway through general education. At both campuses, courses in the pathway emphasize engagement with core texts.

- Build learning communities whereby cohorts of incoming students simultaneously enroll in one "gateway" course in which students read common texts across sections, paired with another general education course. The design enables students to embark on a common experience while drawing interdisciplinary connections between courses. Campuses include Colorado State University, Virginia Union University, and Fort Lewis College.

The table that follows demonstrates how implementation grantees are meeting the "gateway" and "pathway" components of the Cornerstone program model, underlining its adaptability in a wide range of campus settings.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
American University	Project leaders are scaling "The Examined Life," a subset of First-Year Seminar (FYS) sections with a single common syllabus focused on transformative texts (FYS is required of incoming first-year and transfer students; typically, each section is focused on a topic of the instructor's choosing). All sections in this subset of FYS sections have the same title and all sections read the same texts, chosen collaboratively by faculty teaching the course. Readings include Plato's Apology, Augustine's Confessions, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The approach has been so successful that new clusters of FYS sections are being planned with shared syllabi on "The Making of Scientific Change" and "Imagining the Good Life."	AU's 15-credit "Lincoln Scholars" certificate, where students are required to complete four 3-credit general education courses with an emphasis on core texts, and three 1-credit courses that help students see the connections between the humanities and careers in government and politics. The courses in the main sequence are "The Examined Life"; "Literature and the Ethical Life," where students read Homer, Austen, Baldwin, and Ellison; "Individual Freedom vs. Authority," where students read Plato's Republic, DuBois' Souls of Black Folk; Descartes' Discourse on Method; and "Roots of Political Economy," where students read Locke, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Smith, Marx, Keynes, and Hayek. The first course in the sequence for the certificate meets the First-Year Seminar requirement and enables a significant share of the incoming student body to participate in a common intellectual experience. The next three courses in the sequence meet general education requirements (or are expected to meet general education requirements by the end of the grant period).	During the planning grant phase, project leaders obtained curricular approval for "The Examined Life,"; recruited and prepared instructors to teach from the common "Examined Life" syllabus; and laid the groundwork to add additional sections to the main course sequence for the "Lincoln Scholars" certificate.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Anne Arundel Community College	Faculty participating in AACC's newly launched Center for Liberal Arts Work (CLAW), commit to incorporating texts from a consensus list of texts that is expected to be revised every three years. The gateway to the CLAW experience is the English composition sequence (ENG 101/102) required for associate-degree seeking students. Faculty teaching ENG 101 will assign five common excerpts in the first three week of the semester (the list for fall 2024 is as follows: excerpts from Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own,* M.K., Asante's "Two Sets of Notes," Nicolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*, and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*).	Students will have a coherent pathway to complete general education requirements through the CLAW curriculum, which consists of the redesigned English composition sequence; tagged sections of general education courses that feature transformative texts and discussion-based pedagogy; and an interdisciplinary capstone seminar that will transfer as a general education elective in Maryland's statewide transfer core. Students who complete at least 12 credits of the CLAW curriculum will earn a letter of recognition.	Not applicable
Augustana College	Augustana College's general education program is an adaptation of the Cornerstone model, creating intentional, coherent threads through the GE program, providing students with a clear narrative of their educational experience and aiming to to create a more accessible, engaging, and intellectually vibrant GE experience. It involves refinement and implementation of a first-year gateway course for all incoming students based on common texts. Each section will draw at least 50 percent of texts from the consensus list of 50 texts. Illustrative texts include Silent Spring by Rachel Carson, The Rhetoric by Aristotle, and Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe.	The revised general education program includes thematically-oriented general education pathways. The experiential and thematic pathways will tackle questions such as: What does it mean to be happy? What does it mean to be a citizen? What is our responsibility to our environment? What does it mean to love? What does it mean to live a flourishing life? Further, humanities faculty have developed new programs that connect the humanities to pre-professional and STEM disciplines, including a new experiential minor in Integrative Medicine and the Humanities and paired first-year honors courses on food and sustainability.	During the planning phase, Augustana laid the groundwork for implementation by engaging faculty across campus, developing a consensus list of transformative texts, and piloting gateway courses with shared texts.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	**Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations**	**How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used**
Austin Community College (ACC)	ACC is scaling the Great Questions Seminar (GQS), a gateway course fulfilling the “Student Success Course” requirement that is increasingly the norm at community colleges to orient students to the institution and its resources and learn the skills and dispositions to be successful in college. All sections of GQS share a uniform syllabus with four major readings that have been selected as aids to reflection on the personal journey on which students are embarking: Homer's Odyssey, Plato's Meno, Euclid's Elements, and selections of religious poetry from around the world. GQS now enrolls over 650 students annually.	The "Great Questions Journey" through general education distribution requirements, where students can take courses, spanning government, history, Mexican-American Studies, theater, and speech, with an emphasis on primary texts.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders obtained curricular approval for "The Great Questions Seminar"; ensured the course was accepted in virtually all departments' degree plans as meeting the college-wide Student Success Course requirement; and established the professional development model (a combination of an annual summer institute and ongoing workshops over the academic year) to recruit, certify, and prepare instructors to teach GQS.
Bard College	Bard has a longstanding year-long first-year seminar sequence required of all incoming students. Taught from a common syllabus by faculty from every discipline, this existing course is the foundation of the Bard intellectual community.	Bard already takes seriously engagement with transformative texts, and is using its Cornerstone recognition grant to extend students’ engagement with core texts beyond the first year of college by launching a sophomore-level sequence of seminars anchored in common core texts for all students.	Not applicable.
Cal Poly Maritime Academy	Faculty will ensure all sections of required writing courses (ENG 100/101/102) are anchored in common reading assignments drawn from a consensus list of texts. Faculty expect to generate a list of 15 texts annually inspired by the theme of education, literacy, and community and commit to teaching at least five texts from that list in common across sections. Faculty will also redesign ENG 220, a general education course required by three of the largest CPMA majors, along similar lines. By the end of the grant period, all sections of these signature English courses will be redesigned so the entire incoming CPMA class—about 250 students annually—benefit from a common intellectual experience.	After completing at least one gateway course, students have the option to earn a Certificate in Integrated General Education by completing an additional nine units of their General Education requirements in one of three thematic clusters: Maritime Culture, Leadership and Global Citizenship, or Environment and Sustainability.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings, secure approval for the new certificate, and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses. Faculty piloted redesigned ENG gateway courses during the planning phase. Representative texts used included Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken” and Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.”

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
California Poly Pomona	CPP is redesigning three history courses that fulfill the California State University system's American Institutions and Ideals requirement: HIST 2201, and HIST 2202, and HIST 3340. These courses will be transformed from conventional lecture-based history and government surveys into seminar-style courses that will give students the opportunity to read common sets of core texts that have shaped the American political experiment.	CCP will also launch a new minor in Global Justice, for which the redesigned HIST 2201/2202/3340 will serve as the foundation. Students will complete designated courses organized around the theme of Global Justice that meet general education requirements as part of the minor.	Not applicable
Catawba College	Catawba College is implementing a first-year two-semester sequence called "The Pursuit" to engage students in a set of common texts and an issue or problem to help them connect humanistic inquiry with their professional aspirations. In the first semester of the first year, students in "The Hero's Journey" subset of first-year seminar sections will benefit from a common syllabus with common readings and assignments.	In the second semester of the first year, students will be assigned to sections based largely on their major (business, health, or environmental sciences), with opportunities to come together across sections for field trips, guest lectures, and other events related to the common issue they are studying at regular points throughout the semester. Humanities texts will be incorporated into each section to help students make connections between the humanities and their professional aspirations.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders piloted three sections of the two-course sequence and garnered the necessary curricular approvals and sufficient faculty recruitment/ preparation to scale up the program.
Catholic University of America	Students entering Catholic University of America (CUA) will begin with Cornerstone English 101 in the fall of freshman year, followed by two gateway courses "Transformative Texts I: Citizenship and Belonging" in the spring of freshman year and "Transformative Texts II: Citizens and Communities" in fall of sophomore year. The three courses have assigned readings for each week/unit pre-determined by participating faculty; all other reading assignments are drawn from a common list.	After completing the common intellectual experience sequence, students in the STEM and professional schools can then select one of the four pathways: Medical Humanities; Philosophy, Politics, and Economics; Global Scholars; and Research Scholars. Each pathway consists of three humanities-based courses that build on the gateway courses and are for particular majors. The pathways are designed to better link students' humanities educations with their professional degrees—and better connect faculty in a common enterprise of providing that coherence.	The planning period led to the development of the composition course entitled Cornerstone English 101: Writing and Rhetoric that uses great writings for readings; the development of two gateway courses based on transformative texts; and the design of four pathways through general education requirements.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Clark Atlanta University (CAU)	All sections of the first-year seminar, which is required of all first-year students, will be organized around readings drawn from a common list (with at least 20 percent of reading assignments drawn from the common list) and engagement with the "Art of the Negro" murals by Hale Woodruff and other artifacts in the "Objects Classroom" of the CAU Art Museum.	Students will also be encouraged to further explore the African Diasporic experience through classic and contemporary transformative humanities texts in selected general education courses that meet the university's humanities/fine arts requirements. These courses will be revised to draw from the same reading list used to inform the design of the first-year seminar. Students will also have the option to earn the DuBois Fellows certificate by completing the first-year seminar sequence, two of the selected general education humanities courses, and two Honors Colloquia that emphasize the humanities.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings, secure approval for the new certificate, and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.
Clemson University	Clemson is implementing a first-year seminar gateway course entitled HUM 1010 "Living Together." It is a newly approved course that meets the university's written communication requirement and emphasizes readings that reflect the ongoing challenge of constructing a community that strives to be genuinely democratic. The HUM 1010 sections are organized around a common list of texts designed to put classical and contemporary works in conversation with one another; the expectation is that instructors will have at least 80 percent of reading assignments based on the list. The gateway seminar is expected to serve one-third of the incoming class by spring 2025.	Students can complete a series of three courses that fall under the rubric of "Learning in Common" and fulfill general education distribution requirements. The "Learning in Common" courses will provide additional opportunities for students to engage with core texts and to connect them to their professionally oriented majors. The project team is targeting existing general education courses that are required for pre-professional students (e.g., PHIL 3440, an ethics course required for business students) along with humanities electives that meet distribution requirements. Finally, the HUM 3150 "Transforming Our World" capstone will emphasize how ideas and practices shape our interconnected world and fulfill Clemson's Global Challenges requirement. Students who complete the entire track may earn a minor in the humanities.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with student representatives and academic advisors to design the six-course sequence anchored in core texts to appeal to and address the interests and needs of technically focused students and lay the groundwork for the predictive enrollment modeling of those who would complete the new core stream.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Colorado State University	Colorado State University's "Green and Gold" initiative is aimed at those students who are undecided regarding their majors and will create a common intellectual experience for those students. The new fall and spring semester gateway courses in the first year, totaling six credits, are respectively entitled "Questions for Human Flourishing" (i.e., the "gold" sections) and "Thinking Towards a Thriving Planet" (i.e., the "green" sections). These courses meet the institution's distribution requirements for diversity and equity and arts and humanities. Instructors will draw at least half of their reading assignments from each course's primary text list. The "gold" list has about 100 works and ranges from Homer to Toni Morrison, while the "green" list is shorter, with around 40 works spanning Aristotle, Genesis, indigenous mythologies, Emily Dickinson, and Henry David Thoreau. The first-year gateway sequence will enroll 250 students, representing one-quarter of the incoming undeclared majors, by spring 2024.	The pathway will help students connect the humanities to the professionally oriented programs of study that most students at Colorado State eventually choose. Colorado State is developing a 15-credit certificate to encourage students to pursue thematically linked sets of general education courses (e.g., "environmental health and climate change," "animal, planet, and human health," "food and nutrition," "sustainable ecosystem and water resources," "clean and sustainable energy," "scholarly and artistic creation," "equity and social justice," "civic engagement," "dialogue that ethnically engages difference").	The project leaders used the planning period to develop the two-semester sequence and explored the use of cohort scheduling across both semesters and across multiple courses to deepen community-building outside of the classroom for participating students.
CUNY Lehman College	Lehman aims to create a common intellectual experience for rising juniors. Third-year students at Lehman, whether they are transfer or native students, are required to complete at least two of five 300-level "LEH" seminars as part of general education. The LEH seminars serve as the site for creating a common experience anchored in shared texts; participating LEH sections will draw readings from a common list of transformative texts, with instructors expected to have at least half their reading assignments come from the common list.	Students will have the option to pursue the ATLAS (Anchored in Liberal Arts) minor. To complete minor requirements, students are expected take at least two additional LEH seminars and complete a capstone course where they draw connections between readings and assignments across the LEH seminars and between the LEH seminars and their program of study.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings, secure approval for the new minor, and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Dillard University	Dillard aims to embed common readings in ENG 111 and ENG 112, which is required of all incoming students.	Dillard will create a core-text stream through general education and launch a 12-credit certificate. In addition to ENG 111 and ENG 112, all students at Dillard are required to take a World Literature course. The certificate will require those three courses plus at least one more upper-level humanities course in English or Theatre. Faculty will embed core texts drawn from the common list in a suite of general education courses so that students will have an opportunity to engage with core texts from different disciplinary perspective as they move through their general education distribution requirements.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings, secure approval for the new certificate, and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.
Emory University	Both the Oxford and Emory campuses will provide a common intellectual experience anchored in shared readings in their first-year seminar courses that are required of incoming students. At Oxford College, sections of the first-year Discovery Seminar, taught by students' faculty advisors, will now be organized in clusters and share at least three readings. At Emory College, subsets of the First-Year Seminar will be organized around a common syllabus, with at least 12 weeks of a 16-week syllabus unfolding in a lockstep fashion.	At Oxford College, each cluster of Discovery Seminar sections will serve as a springboard to sequences of general education courses organized around the following themes: Social Responsibility and Ethics; Global Engagement; Creativity and Innovation; and Communication and Critical Thinking. Students who take a Discovery Seminar and at least three general education courses within a cluster will earn the Oxford College PATHS (Professional Advancement Through Humanities Study)	Emory's yearlong planning process advanced a university-wide effort in general education reform. Faculty generated a provisional list of texts and began to develop a summer institute with the content oriented to advance their respective goals around teaching with common readings and embedding transformative texts throughout their general education curriculum.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
		Certificate on their transcripts. At Emory College, students will have the opportunity to pursue a core-text stream through general education, taking designated sections or courses that emphasize engagement with transformative texts.	
Fort Lewis College (FLC)	FLC will cultivate a common intellectual experience through a newly launched “Frame” course designed around common transformative humanities texts. Reading assignments for the "Frame" course will draw from a common list of readings. The course is expected to serve over half of the incoming class by spring 2024.	The “Kaleidoscapes” Learning Circle, a 4-course general education certificate that requires the introductory “Frame” course; a “Lens” pairing of two courses, a humanities course and a course from another discipline; and a humanities elective course. Each "Lens" pairing will have at least one common unit that connects classical and indigenous transformative texts. All four courses for the certificate meet general education distribution requirements. The certificate is designed to be completed in the first year to give students a sense of momentum and encourage persistence to the next year of undergraduate study.	Not applicable.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	**Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations**	**How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used**
Houston Community College	The Human Horizons program at HCC will be anchored in HUMA 1301, with participating sections of the course informed by a consensus list of texts and orienting students to complete a specially marked general education pathway through existing associate of arts degree plans. Participating faculty who staff HUMA 1301 will be expected to have at least half of their reading assignments to come from the consensus list; commonality in sections for HUMA 1301 in this context will be driven by grant-supported workshops on teaching with core texts. Examples of readings from the Houston Community College list range from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.	HCC will provide students with a core text-based stream through general education. Participating sections of general education courses will be tagged in the registration system so opportunities to pursue discussion-based courses that emphasize core texts are visible to students.	During the planning period, Houston Community College generated an extensive list of 150 transformative texts to be used for Human Horizons tagged sections of HUMA 1301 and other general education courses. They also worked with the registrar and other administrators to determine procedures and responsibilities related to tagging Human Horizon sections in the registration system so they are easy for students to seek out.
Howard University	Howard developed a Cornerstone pathway through its new general education requirements, including a gateway first-year elective course that meets the university's first-year writing requirement. All sections of this gateway course will be organized around one pairing of significant texts (bridging classical and contemporary texts), with additional reading assignments chosen from the consensus list for that course. The gateway course is expected to reach one-quarter of the incoming class at Howard by the end of the implementation period.	Following the gateway course, students will have the option to embark on a 15-credit Cornerstone Integrated Liberal Arts certificate program to meet Howard's recently approved general education distribution requirements for experiential learning, team-taught courses, and third-year writing while integrating the humanities into topics that engage its most popular majors (biology, political science, and psychology), e.g., an experiential course that utilizes the cultural resources in Washington, DC such as the Folger Library, the National Gallery of Art, the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian, or a team-taught interdisciplinary course that covers various topics, such as the Good Life and Rise of the Machines.	During the planning grant, Howard developed and piloted a new first-year elective course, housed in its Interdisciplinary Studies department, to meet the university's first-year writing requirement and designed to foreground the history and experience of Africa and the African diaspora in dialogue with other global cultural traditions from antiquity to modernity.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP)	IUP is launching a 16-credit certificate called "Big Ideas: Transformative Texts and the Professions." It begins with a two-semester gateway sequence entitled "Big Ideas I: Ancient World to Enlightenment" and "Big Ideas II: Enlightenment to Present." These gateway courses are designed to introduce students to transformative texts from around the world along with fundamental reading, writing, analytical and life skills. At least 50 percent of the readings for each course in the two-semester gateway must come from a common reading list that spans *Frankenstein*, Dante's *Inferno*, *The Tempest*, *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*, and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. The two-semester gateway is expected to reach at least 20 percent of the incoming class.	Having completed the gateway sequence, students can move on to thematically aligned clusters of general education courses and a capstone course to complete the 16-credit "Big Ideas: Transformative Texts and the Professions" certificate. The thematic clusters of courses meet other general education distribution requirements (clusters include "law and government," "management, information, and organization," "mind, body, and health," and "science and the environment"). Students also complete a newly approved one-credit capstone experience in which students put together a portfolio of work, aimed at future employers, drawn from assignments completed in courses taken for the certificate along with a reflective essay that connects them to their major and career aspirations.	During the planning period, project leadership worked with faculty colleagues to lay the groundwork to launch the following: the certificate program that features the two-semester gateway sequence, augmented with modules of applied research and life skills; the thematic clusters of humanities courses that meet general education requirements and help students connect the humanities to their aspired fields of work; and the capstone experience that intertwines the humanities into students' pre-professional final year of study.
Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC)	LBCC is creating a common intellectual experience through anchor texts in Destination Graduation, WR 121 and COMM 114/111—all required for graduation. The Destination Graduation course is a one-credit required course to help familiarize students with the college's resources and supports and enhance their skills for success in college; all sections of the course that are designed for students on the associate degree/transfer pathway will incorporate a module on Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* to help students reflect on the journey on which they are embarking. Instructors for WR 121 and COMM 114/111 will choose 2-3 readings each quarter that will be used across all participating sections. The redesigned Destination Graduation and WRIT/COMM courses will respectively reach 70 percent and 45 percent of the incoming class.	In addition to the common intellectual experience, LBCC is also more coherent experience of general education through engagement with core texts in HUM 101/102/103, ART 102, and MUS 161. Students will have the option to earn a Liberal Arts Award by completing 10 credits of the designated sections of Writing "WR 121", Communications "COMM 114/111", and other humanities courses.	The project leaders used the planning phase to pilot the general education sequences for business and biology students and develop the ten-credit Liberal Arts Award.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	**Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations**	**How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used**
Lyon College	Lyon College is implementing its three "Conversations" gateway courses: (1) Conversations: the American Experience (2) Conversations: Building the Modern World (3) Conversations: Imagining Lives through World Literature that are all grounded in common transformative texts. These three courses invite students to deliberate on questions of direct relevance to their lives: How do I find my place in the dynamic histories and politics of the United States? How can I imagine the lives of others in order to have constructive dialogue with them? How have the histories of the world shaped my identity, the world around me, and the important issues we face today? The gateway courses will reach the entire incoming student body.	Lyon will implement a Medical Humanities minor as the pathway component of the Cornerstone model. The minor was designed in consultation with Lyon's pre-med faculty. Health science students will be encouraged to complete these studies in the humanities that are proving valuable to medical schools and nursing programs.	During the planning phase, the project leaders worked with their faculty colleagues to plan for four gateway courses and a general education pathway in the Medical Humanities; generate a consensus list of transformative texts; garner the necessary curricular approvals; and pilot sections of the gateway course.
Marshall University	Marshall University is implementing its *Herd Humanities* program, a fitting name given its mascot, the bison. Herd Humanities is anchored by a two-course gateway sequence centered on transformative texts: "identity and community" (SCLA 101: Transformative Texts) and "reality & perception" (SCLA 102: Transformative Texts). Herd Humanities will reach one-quarter of the incoming first-year class by the end of the implementation period.	If students wish to pursue humanities coursework beyond the two gateway courses, they can fulfill additional general education requirements while working toward a 16-credit hour Advanced Critical Thinking certificate in one of several themed tracks, including Science & Technology, Environment & Sustainability, Healthcare & Medicine, Management & Organization, and Conflict Resolution & Justice.	The project leaders spent the planning phase preparing for the Herd Humanities Program, generating a bank of consensus texts, garnering the necessary curricular approvals and sufficient faculty recruitment, and piloting sections of the gateway course.

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Norfolk State University	Norfolk State aims to embed anchor texts in participating sections of ENG 101/102 required of all students, with the goal of reaching at least 25 percent of the incoming class. Instructors in participating sections of the gateway 101/102 sequence will assign a shared suite of texts each semester, with an emphasis on putting texts in conversation with one another (e.g., *Fences* by August Wilson, *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, and *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles to explore family relationships).	Students have the option to complete a certificate in African American Studies. The 21-credit certificate is set up as follows: students participate in designated sections of the two-semester English composition sequence and then choose one of three concentrations (“equity and justice," "race, gender, and sexuality," and "Africa and the Diaspora"). Each thematically organized cluster has a mix of general education courses and humanities electives. While students have the ability to complete general education distribution requirements within each cluster, they are also incentivized to go beyond the minimum of 14 credits in the humanities that is required of all students.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings, secure approval for the new certificate, and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.
North Carolina State University	NC State will implement a gateway course entitled Transformative Texts in American Life: Engaging Across Difference. Instructors teaching the gateway course in any given semester will meet before the beginning of the term to choose from a consensus list of transformative texts five or six titles in common across all sections. Instructors will then curate the remaining texts from the consensus list and perhaps one or two of their own from outside the list.	After taking the required gateway course, students can choose to pursue a 12-credit certificate program entitled Practical Humanity: Integrated Humanities and Social Sciences. The remaining nine credits after the gateway course will be electives that students can choose from a list of nearly 100 other general education courses offered within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences with the expectation that six of the credits must be within one thematic track: Business & Organization, Conflict & Resolution, Environment & Sustainability, Health & Wellness, or Innovation & Sciences.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders designed and piloted the core three-credit gateway course, laid the groundwork for launching the 12-credit certificate program, and recruited faculty to teach in the program.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Northern Kentucky University	Northern Kentucky University (NKU) will scale up a six-credit gateway housed within its ENG 101/102 requirement as part of the STAR (Study, Think, Apply, Reflect) program. In STAR sections of ENG 101 and ENG 102, students will be exposed to at least three common texts each semester. In addition to the common texts across all STAR gateway sections, faculty will draw a minimum of 50 percent of the assigned readings in their section from NKU's consensus list of transformative texts.	During the implementation period, project directors will focus on creating nine-credit "certificate streams," or pathways, to complement the six-credit gateway that will lead to a humanities focused certificate entitled Transformational Thinking for Community and Career. The certificate is available to all NKU students who wish to pursue it.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders designed the STAR (Study, Think, Apply, Reflect) program, worked with faculty to build a common list of readings, and created a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.
Pepperdine University	Pepperdine's strengthened its first-year Foundation of Reasoning (FOR) course, which is serves as a first-year requirement organized around common readings and is integral to its new Seaver Core. With Teagle support, starting in AY2025-2026, Pepperdine will build its capacity to offer a sufficient number of FOR sections to absorb the entire incoming class. Common readings on the FOR syllabus include Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" & "Euthyphro", selections from Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologica, John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism," Karl Marx's "Estranged Labor," Ursula LeGuin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," and selected speeches by Frederick Douglass.	A new Great Books pathway through the general education curriculum will include an eight-course sequence designed to meet new distribution requirements in the Seaver Core (e.g., Great Books of the U.S. to satisfy the new U.S. Experience requirement in the Seaver Core).	Not applicable

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Pennsylvania State University (PSU)	PSU will scale HUM 101: Transformative Texts and Foundational Knowledge, and HUM 102: Transformative Texts, Contemporary Issues, and Practical Perspectives. The common intellectual experience in HUM 101 and HUM 102 is cultivated as follows. Faculty at each participating PSU campus will generate a list of texts for each course based on a set of common criteria; instructors teaching each course are then expected to draw almost all readings from the list, with the space to choose one additional reading that is not already on the list.	Students will have the option to complete the Keystone Certificate, a 12-credit program involving the gateway sequence HUM 101/102 and two humanities general education electives that have been curated for specific educational/career pathways (e.g., "health and medicine," "environment and sustainability"). All four courses for the certificate meet PSU general education distribution requirements. As part of the rollout throughout the PSU system, the two elective courses for the certificate will be curated to align with 135 non-humanities degree plans across the seven participating campuses.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders piloted HUM 101/102; secured approval for the course to be taught system-wide and for the new certificate to be offered system-wide; worked with faculty to generate common criteria for building reading lists for each participating campus; and developed a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty across participating campuses.
Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)	All sections of a redesigned Public Speaking course will draw upon a common list of texts; instructors are expected to assign at least half their readings from the common list. This course will in turn serve as the anchor for an "immersion," a series of three thematically linked courses that all RIT students are expected to complete as part of general education. At least ten sections of the Public Speaking course will be offered each fall, reaching 15 percent of the incoming class.	All courses for the immersion are nested within an optional certificate, with all courses for both immersion and certificate fulfilling general education distribution requirements. Courses for the immersion and certificate will draw at least one-quarter of their reading assignments from the common list to provide students with more opportunities to engage with primary texts.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings, secure approval for the new immersion and certificate, and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.
Rhodes College	With this recognition grant to its longstanding core texts program *Search,* Rhodes will launch a series of initiatives to increase the visibility of the program on campus and in the greater Memphis area, vitalize the experience of students in the program, and develop and deploy teams of student academic leaders who can promote a more constructive and dynamic engagement with the humanities among their younger peers.	Rhodes will implement a minor in the Humanities for students who wish to engage in additional humanistic study regardless of their major.	The project leaders used the planning grant phase to plan strategically about the revitalization of the existing *Search* three-course gateway sequence and the creation of an interdisciplinary Humanities Minor.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	**Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations**	**How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used**
Saint Louis University	SLU is harnessing its newly passed core curriculum by offering the "Confluence: Interdisciplinary Humanities" program, which begins with Ignite, its gateway first-year seminar. Fifty percent of all readings in the *Confluence* flagged sections of the Ignite seminar are from the consensus list of transformative texts. The texts represent several traditions and a broad range of books from across the world, while also reflecting SLU's character as a Jesuit university located in St. Louis.	After taking the gateway course, students have the option to take two additional general education courses, each grounded in transformative texts, to earn the *Confluence* certificate. The pathway courses are designed to appeal to STEM and healthcare students.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to develop a common list of readings, developed the *Confluence* program, and piloted the *Confluence* Ignite first-year seminar.
Sonoma State University	SSU aims to extend a highly integrative approach to general education long enjoyed by students in its Hutchins School of Liberal Studies so it benefits a broader swathe of its undergraduate student body. The Hutchins curriculum emphasizes close reading of core texts in small seminar-style sections, with syllabi shared across all sections. Students are grouped in cohorts and efficiently complete all general education distribution requirements through an intensive series of four interdisciplinary courses, one each semester during their first and second years at Sonoma State. This approach will now be extended to students outside the Hutchins School, with particular attention to undeclared students who would benefit from the community building that comes from participation in a common intellectual experience. SSU will embed common readings across sections of a yearlong sequence offered through its University Studies program known as UNIV 150A/B. The reading assignments in UNIV 150A/B will mirror core texts assigned in the first-year Hutchins curriculum LIBS 101/102. Representative readings expected to be used across LIBS 101/102 and UNIV 150 A/B include Sophocles' Oedipus Trilogy; Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*; and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.9	SSU will block enroll undeclared majors in the redesigned sections of UNIV 150A/B along with general education courses in mathematics and composition, thus creating a cohorted experience to complete the "Golden 4" general education requirements (i.e., oral communication, critical thinking, composition, and mathematics).	During the planning phase, tenure-track faculty who staff the LIBS 101/102 and UNIV 150A/B sequences came together to discuss how to develop a syllabus with points of connection between Hutchins and University Studies as well as a plan for professional development for faculty are prepared to teach the selected common readings across sections.

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Stanford University	Stanford has established a yearlong requirement for "Civic, Liberal, and Global Education" to be completed by all incoming first-year students. The sequence of three seminars for the requirement is as follows: "Why College" in the fall quarter; "Citizenship in the 21st Century" in the winter quarter; and "Global Perspectives" in the spring quarter. Sections of the fall and winter seminars are designed around common lists of readings: the list for the fall seminar, ranging from Plato's Allegory of the Cave to Ta-Nehisi Coates's Between the World and Me, explores the purpose of a liberal education and the claim that only the examined life is worth living; the list for the winter seminar (e.g., Rousseau's Social Contract) aims to encourage reflection on the challenges of a fully participatory 21st century democracy. The common reading lists for the fall and winter seminars are determined annually by faculty, with instructors expected to have at least 75 percent of their assigned readings to come from the list set for each seminar.	Stanford has a single set of general education distribution requirements for all students regardless of major. Faculty are devising curricular "roadmaps" to satisfy distribution requirements with coursework in the humanities that are grouped by students' professional aspirations (e.g., "liberal education and the engineer," "global perspectives on science and technology"). These general education pathways are designed to ensure that all students, regardless of major, have significant exposure to humanistic questions and incentivize students to pursue a humanities certificate or minor.	Not applicable.
SUNY Erie Community College	SUNY Erie Community College's Essential Texts program follows the Cornerstone model, with a gateway course (EN 100) that fulfills SUNY's Basic Communication General Education requirement and is taken by an overwhelming majority of its students. As part of the redesigned syllabus, instructors of EN 100 will follow a common module for the first three weeks focused on Marcus Aurelius's Meditations and selections from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, with the expectation that at least half of the readings for the balance of the semester will be drawn from its Essential Texts list.	The Essential Texts list will be used to inform redesign of general education courses; students who complete at least four general education courses (about half of their general education curriculum) with the Essential Texts flag will have it notated on their transcript and have a special seal with the program logo placed on their diploma. Representative texts from the Essential Texts list include Beowulf, Bhagavad Gita, and Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights.	The planning grant supported professional development activities and the development of the new EN 100 curriculum.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
SUNY Onondaga Community College	During the implementation grant period, OCC created a new gateway course called Introduction to the Liberal Arts (LBL 101). LBL 101 is a required student success course for its Humanities and Social Science degrees and for all other students meets SUNY's general education distribution requirements for the Humanities and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice. Since the completion of the implementation grant period, the course has been approved as a requirement for its Human Services degree; fulfills program requirements in its Communication Studies and General Studies degrees; and meets SUNY's general education requirement for Information Literacy. All sections of LBL 101 have common anchor texts, and all readings are drawn from a consensus list of texts generated by faculty.	Through the "Enduring Questions" pathway, students have the option to complete at least 12 credits of general education coursework that draws on core texts.	During the planning phase, LBL faculty shepherded the approval of LBL 101 through the internal governance process; set up a process with the registrar's office to identify and flag participating sections of general education courses for the Enduring Questions pathways; developed their consensus list of common readings and policies for how the list was to used in LBL 101 and other general education courses; and developed a faculty professional development plan to teach with the redesigned curriculum.
Texas A&M University System	The Texas A&M University System will develop and scale a humanities educational framework that, upon full implementation, will be integrated into the general education requirements at ten campuses within the Texas A&M University System. The framework will be anchored by a gateway course, The Human Experience, that introduces students to the humanities using transformative texts. The gateway course on each campus will encourage faculty to pull at least 40 percent of their course readings from a common list of transformative texts. The gateway course will be reinforced by other approved humanities courses that are distributed through each participating campus's Core Curriculum.	Students who complete the gateway course, two additional Core Curriculum courses, and one upper-level humanities course will earn a Humanities Certificate.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders collaborated with faculty colleagues at their respective campuses to develop common standards for the relevant courses and for the identification and use of transformative texts; authored the necessary curriculum proposals to implement the initiative on their own campuses; and liaised with faculty leaders from other system institutions to begin planning for implementation on their campuses.

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The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art	The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences' (HSS) four-semester core curriculum, known as "The Union," centers humanistic learning as an essential element of preprofessional education. The newly-designed HSS core involves a shared syllabus that allows at least two-thirds of the incoming class to participate in a common intellectual experience as part of the first semester gateway course. The organizing question for the redesigned first-semester gateway course for fall 2025 is: “How do you change your mind?” Faculty anticipate periodically revising the organizing question and its accompanying reading list every three years.	The HSS core also formalizes common transformative texts across sections of its required courses for the second and third semesters, and reconfigures the fourth semester course as a research writing workshop that asks students to complete an extended project that applies humanistic learning to issues relevant in their preprofessional education in engineering, art, and architecture. This fourth semester course also serves as a springboard into minors in the humanities and social sciences.	During the planning phase, Cooper Union laid the groundwork for implementation by selecting common texts and revising the four-semester core curriculum.

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Thomas Jefferson University (TJU)	TJU will scale up a first-year course, "American Visions," and a senior capstone course, "Philosophies of the Good Life," as common bookends of the general education curriculum to be required of all undergraduates. The American Visions gateway course, to be required of all incoming students, will be organized around eight units with two to three pre-selected texts per unit; instructors will be expected to choose at least one text that has been approved for each unit. The capstone course entitled Philosophies of the Good Life will follow a similar structure. The selected key texts focus on both U.S. and global contexts, span multiple disciplines, and are placed strategically in the first and senior years of the program.	In addition to the common bookend courses, TJU will develop three coherent pathways through general education distribution requirements that encourage course-taking in the humanities and align with the interests of pre-professional students. The three general education pathways will be centered on the themes of Health and Wellbeing, Aesthetics and Material Culture, and Sustainability. The pathways sequences will frame issue in the students' future career fields with perspectives in the humanities (e.g., for the health sciences students, a three-course pathway will include courses such as "Cultures of Health and Illness," "Bioethics," and "Global Health Issues"). Students will be able to complete their general education pathway through a combination of existing courses and new humanities courses to be developed to fill in gaps in the curriculum (e.g., the Sustainability pathway has thematically aligned courses that meet four of TJU's five distribution requirements; a new humanities course, Environmental Justice in America, will be developed to meet the fifth requirement).	During the planning period, faculty explored different strategies for establishing a shared learning experience for students: selecting texts that are in dialogue with each other and complement each other either historically or thematically. Faculty leaders also developed the three-course general education pathways during the planning period.
Transylvania University	Transylvania will engage transformative texts in the first-year sequence of courses--First Year Seminar and First Year Research Seminar--with 50 percent of the texts drawn from a core list of 100 texts. By the end of grant period, at least 60 percent of first-year Transylvania students will have experienced a First Year Seminar and First Year Research Seminar grounded in transformative texts.	After taking the two gateway courses, students can choose to pursue a pathway consisting of three humanities-based courses, which Transylvania is calling Learning Communities of Engagement.	Not applicable.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	**Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations**	**How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used**
Trinity Washington University	Trinity Washington University is implementing a two-course gateway exploration of transformative texts entitled "Humanities for Justice." The first gateway course will focus on the question of "What is Justice?" and expose students to different definitions of justice in readings such as Plato's dialogues and Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*. The second course will be "Working for Justice" in which students will examine texts that consider how to achieve justice while learning about historical, interpretive, and analytical approaches to humanistic texts.	The students at Trinity Washington will have the opportunity to satisfy a third of their general education requirements through completion of a first-year, two-course exploration of transformative texts, followed by humanities-focused tracks of study. Completion of a track will earn students a digital badge.	During the planning phase, the project leaders planned for a first-year, two-course gateway exploration of transformative texts and humanities-focused pathway tracks, including the development of a bank of transformative texts and piloting a course.
Tuskegee University	Students at Tuskegee are required to take one-credit student success courses in the fall and spring semesters of their first year. These courses will be redesigned to incorporate six common texts over the course of the academic year while also providing students with an orientation into Tuskegee's institutional history, resources, and the skills students need to cultivate to be successful in college. Students will be encouraged to participate in a series of out-of-class events (e.g., guest lectures related to the key texts of the first-year seminar) and complete a set of writing, community engagement, and creative activities in order to earn the REACH certificate. The certificate is designed to be earned by the end of the first year, providing students with a sense of academic momentum.	Tuskegee requires a minimum of 14 credits in the humanities as part of its general education curriculum. Students will have the option to complete a strand of global humanities general education courses that also serve as the building blocks for a new 18-credit minor in Global Humanities; the minor both incentivizes taking a more coherent cluster of general education courses while also encouraging students to pursue additional coursework in the humanities.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings; secure approval for the new minor; and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.
University of Massachu-setts Amherst	UMass will implement a year-long sequence of two gateway courses: "Traversing Difference with Critical and Creative Thinking--Local Questions" and "Traversing Difference with Critical and Creative Thinking--Global Issues." The two gateway courses satisfy the core university requirements in oral and written communication and information literacy, in addition to fulfilling the UMass core requirements in US diversity and Global Diversity.	After completing the gateway sequence, students can choose to pursue a five-course sequence in one of the four thematic clusters: Environmental Humanities, Science/Technology and the Humanities, Business and the Humanities, and Global Studies and the Humanities.	During the planning grant phase, project leadership worked with faculty colleagues to lay the groundwork and curricular approvals for the year-long sequences of the two new courses and to create a five-course sequence for one of the four thematic clusters.

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University of Michigan-Flint	The structure of the entering class and the current composition of General Education at UM-Flint precluded a traditional gateway experience.	Following a Teagle/NEH funded planning period, the University of Michigan-Flint will implement a pathway certificate program only, which is reflected in the grant amount. The UM-Flint Certificate in Humanistic Inquiry is a 12-15 credit program that draws on existing courses in its general education program and includes four themed pathways: Humans and Robots, Envisioning Just Worlds, Building Sustainable Worlds, and Leading by Living an Examined Life. All themes, and all courses within them, engage transformative texts. Students who complete all components of the pathway, including an ePortfolio, will earn a certificate on their transcript.	During the planning grant phase, UM-Flint developed a liberal arts certificate in General Education. As a regional public university where 60 percent of the students transfer from community colleges or other institutions, and 30 percent are over the age of 25, UM-Flint certificate program aims to bridge the career-focused demands of students with the life enrichment of a humanities-centric education focused on great works of literature, history, and philosophy.
University of Nevada-Las Vegas (UNLV)	UNLV created the Great Works Academic Certificate (GWAC) program comprised of four courses in 2004: World Literature I, Great Works of Philosophy and Literature, and two electives from a list of courses that devote at least half of the course to transformative texts. UNLV now seeks to make transformative texts more widely read by their students by developing the program in two directions: (1) the Great Works Path the General Education and (2) a Minor in Great Works. With either track, the Path to General Education or the Minor, students will meet most of their general education requirements. In other words, UNLV will focus on increasing the number of students who meet general education requirements with transformative text courses by having students simultaneously fulfill general education requirements and earn a certificate or complete a minor. The project is expected to reach 500 students annually.	The Great Works Path to General Education track will involve regularly offering two additional courses, one of which is the US Constitution/Great Works 350 focused on the fundamental principles of U.S. government and politics, and the other is a "Great Works" course/Great Works 300 that compares one book of ancient philosophy or literature with one book of modern philosophy or literature. For the Minor, in addition to the two courses in the Great Works Path to General Education, students will be required to take six credits of electives with an emphasis on transformative texts.	Not applicable.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
University of Nevada-Reno	UNR's Core Humanities Program is almost 40 years old. Undergraduate students are required to take at least two of the three interdisciplinary humanities courses as part of their GE requirements. This "recognition" grant to University of Nevada, Reno allows for gathering its humanities faculty to revise the curriculum so as to create a shared intellectual experience for its students.	Not applicable	Not applicable
University of Notre Dame	Notre Dame requires a University Seminar and College Seminar for all first- and second-year students respectively. All students are also required to complete an Integration Course as part of general education, where a topic or issue is tackled by two or more distinct disciplinary perspectives. The project will target these three courses to develop two "tracks"—in health, humanities and society (HHS), and in science, technology, and values (STV)—for meeting general education requirements, while also ensuring commonality of experience for incoming students in the participating sections of University Seminar. Texts range from Plato's Timaeus to Shakespeare's The Tempest to Aldous Huxley's Brave New World.	The three-course sequence as part of general education for the HHS and STV tracks is designed to incentivize students to complete a variety of certificates and minors in the humanities.	Not applicable.
University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez	University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez will implement a revised gateway humanities sequence, Introduction to Western Civilization I and II, that is required of all incoming students. The sequence will be redesigned to incorporate at least half the readings for each section from a consensus list of texts, of which three texts are chosen in common annually that relate to the themes of Medical Humanities, Environmental Humanities, and Humanities and Engineering, to be taught across all sections.	The certificate program in Applied Humanities can be pursued as a track after taking the gateway sequence. The certificate involves a set of courses that encourages critical engagement with Puerto Rican humanities crises, while linking STEM and cultural questions in ways that incentivize continuing Humanities studies as a part of preprofessional training. This pathway through General Education thus encourages a STEM-inflected experience that integrates humanities questions into the students' career preparation, while fulfilling requisite GE credits and earning credits toward a certificate.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked to adapt its former requirement, "Introduction to Western Culture I and II" to establish common intellectual experience around shared texts.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
University of Wisconsin-Platteville	UW-Platteville is launching the Helios Program for Integrated Liberal Arts. The common intellectual experience is a gateway course anchored in core texts. Students at UW-Platteville can satisfy the gateway in one of two ways: through designated sections of the College Writing Course required of incoming first-year students or through a new course called "Introduction to the Humanities" to serve incoming transfer students or students who become interested in the certificate after the first year. Sections of the two gateway course options will draw reading assignments from a common list of transformative texts, with at least half of the readings stemming from the list. The gateway courses are expected to reach 50 percent of the incoming class of first-year and transfer students.	Students who complete either gateway will have the option to complete a 15-credit certificate program that provides thematically organized clusters of general education courses that complement pre-professional majors (tracks include "environment and sustainability," "law and conflict resolution," "science, culture and society," "global citizenship" and "diversity, equity, and inclusion"). After taking the three-credit gateway course and three courses in a thematic cluster, students earn a Certificate in Integrated Liberal Arts on their transcript. The course offerings are available to UW-Platteville's traditional BA/BS programs as well as an online Associate of Applied Science (AAS) program across three campuses.	During the planning phase, UW-Platteville piloted four sections of College Writing across two campuses (enrolling 75 students), developed the initial list of transformative texts, and built the administrative bones of the certificate.
Ursinus College	Twenty-one years ago, Ursinus established the Common Intellectual Experience (CIE), which is a year-long course required of all first-year students. Taught from a common syllabus by faculty from every discipline, this existing course is the foundation of the Ursinus intellectual community. The course is oriented around four questions: What should matter to me? How should we live together? How can we understand the world? What will I do? These are genuine questions, bearing as they do on enduring dilemmas of human existence.	Ursinus already takes seriously engagement with transformative texts, and is using its Cornerstone recognition grant to extend students' engagement with core texts beyond the first year of college. Ursinus is implementing a "vertical" series of three courses: (1) CIE in the first year; (2) Linked Inquiry for sophomores and juniors to study a common topic from the standpoint of diverse disciplines; and (3) Core Capstones for seniors that help students make connections across classes and co-curricular activities.	Not applicable.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Ursuline College	Ursuline College is reimagining its first-year composition two-course sequence to engage transformative texts as a gateway to its existing Rust Belt Pathway certificate program. The program is centered on the idea that institutions are rooted in regions and that the humanities play a vital role in strengthening the civic life of communities. The project will restructure courses to recontextualize Cleveland's history through transformative texts, reaching the entire first-year class.	The existing Rust Belt pathway courses emphasize digital skills, mapping, and storytelling to analyze the history of the region, giving students the intellectual framework to engage locally with the community as problem-solvers and critical thinkers in Cleveland's specific cultural context.	Not applicable.
Vanderbilt University	Vanderbilt University's College of Arts and Science will implement a required first-year two-semester sequence comprised of reading- and writing-intensive courses (the "First-Year Core"), with each of these courses engaging students with key common texts from various epochs and cultures. The two gateway courses will each use a set number of shared texts, with 80 percent of texts chosen from the common list for that course. The First-Year Core is expected to be fully implemented to reach the entire incoming first-year class of its College of Arts and Science by fall 2025.	Vanderbilt will implement a cluster of Exploratory Core electives that build on the questions and themes of the first-year sequence and serve as a launchpad for students' paths through the general education curriculum.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders laid the groundwork to pass the new first-year requirement organized around common texts as part of the relaunch of their general education program, piloted the new first-year sequence anchored in transformative texts, built the First-Year Core and Exploratory Core infrastructure, and recruited faculty to teach in the new first-year sequence so it can be fully scaled to serve the entire incoming class.

	Gateway to create a common intellectual experience anchored in transformative texts for a significant share of the incoming class	Pathway to make general education more coherent and help students link the humanities to their professional aspirations	How planning grant support through the *Cornerstone: Learning for Living* initiative was used
Victoria College	VC aims to embed its common intellectual experience in HUMA 1301 and in ENG 1301, a general education course that is required by virtually all of its degree plans. Both the HUMA 1301 and ENG 1301 courses will be organized in five units that align with the five key meta-majors offered at VC: health, science and engineering, business and technology, industrial trades, and public service. Each unit has a short list of associated texts; faculty will select one common anchor text for each unit to be used across all sections, with additional assignments for that unit drawn from its associated list. For example, for ENG 1301, the unit focused on Health includes texts such as Hippocrates' *On the Sacred Disease* and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*; the Industrial Trades unit includes Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*; and the Public Service unit includes Plato's *Republic* and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.	This approach will be extended to other general education courses. Participating faculty will be expected to incorporate at least one of the five units based on the five key majors at the institution and assign core texts readings from its associated list as part of an institution-wide effort to help students see connections in their general education coursework to their programs of study. For example, sections of general educations courses in government aimed at students in business and technology degree plans may incorporate George Orwell's *1984* from the business and technology unit's reading list so students can reflect on big questions related to freedom and surveillance.	During the planning period, faculty leaders ensured that HUMA 1301 was approved to meet the institution's newly mandated student success course requirement. Redesigned sections of HUMA 1301 and ENG 1301 were also piloted. Faculty leaders also set up a process with the registrar's office to identify and flag participating sections of general education courses for the meta majors' general education pathways; developed their consensus list of common readings for the meta-majors and policies for how the list was to used in HUMA 1301, ENG 1301, and other general education courses; and developed a faculty professional development plan to teach with the redesigned curriculum.
Virginia Union University (VUU)	All students at VUU register for a one-credit student success seminar each semester. The second seminar taken in the second semester of the first year will be paired with an English composition course also required of all students, creating a shared learning experience. Each course pairing will emphasize the same texts and themes; at the same time, students across learning communities will have the experience of reading the same texts across sections as at least half the reading assignments for each section will be drawn from a common list.	The engagement with transformative texts drawn from the common list will continue in subsequent semesters of the leadership seminar. The series of leadership seminars and English composition courses total 11 credits. VUU will launch a new 14-credit certificate that can be completed with those 11 credits and an additional elective course in the humanities that engages transformative texts in dialogue with contemporary issues.	During the planning grant phase, project leaders worked with faculty to build consensus on a common list of readings; secure approval for the new certificate; and develop a professional development plan to recruit and support faculty with teaching the gateway and pathway courses.

Appendices

A: PLAN OF STUDY FOR PURDUE'S CORNERSTONE INTEGRATED LIBERAL ARTS CERTIFICATE

B: SAMPLE SYLLABI

- Sample 1
- Sample 2
- Sample ChatBot Guidelines

C: SAMPLE ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

- Sample Presentation Rubric
- Sample Research Paper Rubric

D: SAMPLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

E: SAMPLE COURSE READER

F: SAMPLE CORNERSTONE FACULTY BOOK CLUB

G: IN THE PRESS

