Re-imagining General Education to Impact Student Success

Presented by:

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Clark Atlanta University Profile

Comprehensive, Private, Urban, Coeducational, Historically Black College/University (HBCU)

Atlanta, GA
Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (2016 to 2026)

- 4,000 Total Enrollment
- 52% Acceptance Rate
- 71 Academic Programs (29 UG/42 G)
- 70% Retention Rate
- 45% Graduation Rate

- CAU is a consolidation of two institutions: Clark College, founded in 1869, the nation's first four-year liberal arts college to serve primarily African Americans, and Atlanta University, founded in 1865, the nation's first African American graduate institution. The institutions were consolidated in 1988 to become Clark Atlanta University.
- CAU is the largest of the four autonomous institutions (CAU, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Morehouse School of Medicine) in the Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC), which boasts one of the largest concentrations of African American students and faculty of color in the United States.
- CAU is the only historically black college/university in the Georgia Research Alliance, an alliance of research institutions in the state.
- CAU is a United Methodist Church-affiliated institution.
- CAU is home to National Public Radio-affiliated only jazz station in Atlanta, WCLK.
General Education Requirements; CAU 2014-16 Undergraduate Catalogue 54-58 credit hours.

- Prior to our redesign, many students devoted 60 – 64 credit hours to general education.
- Undergraduate programs of study ranged from 123 – 135 credit hours depending on the major.
  - Based on the assumption that students were ready to start at FLX 201 level, and
  - STEM majors were ready to start at CMAT 111 (Calculus 1)
- Students had almost no free electives in their degree plans.
  - To meet “deficiencies” such as FLX 101 and 102 required students to take an additional 3 – 6 credit hours beyond the 123 – 135 credit hours in the degree plan.
  - Add to this were high DFW rates in key courses, which presented tremendous burden to degree completion and additional costs on students.
- The general education requirements made it almost impossible for a transfer student with an AA degree to graduate from CAU in less than 6 semesters due to the need to catch up on
THE COMMITTEE CHARGE (11/21/2014)
by Dr. James Hefner, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

• Develop, *ab initio*, a coherent set of learning outcomes that would be addressed by a revised Core Curriculum/General Education program and be met by all CAU graduates.

• Develop common communication and quantitative skills and, where appropriate, specialized communication and quantitative skills that our graduates would need to have mastered with the understanding that the skills may vary with school and discipline.

• Define the core body of knowledge, from the learning outcomes developed, that each graduate should have.
Several themes have been identified on campus in recent years

• In the tradition of a liberal arts education, the combination of the students’ Core Curriculum/General Education requirements, along with their selected degree program must prepare them to be critical thinkers who are culturally, socially, and politically aware, who have a sense of self and a historical consciousness, and who are articulate, and globally competitive.

• The combination of the Core Curriculum/General Education requirements along with their selected degree program should offer students sufficient flexibility in course selection to meet their needs and afford them the opportunity and freedom to explore interests and ideas of their own choosing while on the journey toward their degree completion and job placement.

• Communication and quantitative skills must prepare the students for professional careers and/or further study and personal fulfillment.
In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that
1. serves as a substantial component of each undergraduate degree,
2. ensures breadth of knowledge, and
3. is based on a coherent rationale.

- For baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. *(120 credit hours for a bachelors degree)*
- The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.
- General education courses are college-level and comprise a substantial component of each undergraduate degree.
The core and discipline specific Student Learning Outcomes must produce a graduate that is ready for a career or advanced study (Graduate or Professional School).

**Outcomes:**

- Proficient in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and nonverbal communication
- Competent in financial, quantitative, technological, and scientific literacy
- Skilled in integrative and collaborative learning
- Competent in critical and creative thinking
- Competent in multicultural and global interactions
- Appreciative of humanities/fine arts
- Comprehension of personal and professional ethics, human values, and holistic wellness
# Validation of Proposed Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Priority Ranking (1-7) With 7 most important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes %</td>
<td>No %</td>
<td>Uncertain (Average Rank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Proficient in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and nonverbal communication</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Competent in financial, quantitative, technological, and scientific literacy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Skilled in integrative and collaborative learning</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Competent in critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Competent in multicultural and global interactions</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Appreciate humanities/fine arts</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Understand personal and professional ethics, human values, and holistic wellness</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
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# Example: Proficient in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Nonverbal Communication

## Goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| **Reading**        | - Understands complex text across the curriculum.  
- Comprehends complex text in the discipline. |
| **Writing**        | - Produces written text in appropriate genres that is well organized and developed and adheres to conversations of standard English.  
- Develops written text in acceptable *discipline-specific* format that conforms to discipline-specific writing standards. |
| **Speaking**       | - Communicates orally with fluency, proper prosody and clarity.  
- Communicates orally in the discipline according to discipline-specific guidelines. |
| **Listening**      | - Comprehends spoken language in social, work, and academic settings.  
- Understands orally transmitted messages in the discipline. |
| **Nonverbal**      | - Uses visual and non verbal cues to enhance written and oral language communication.  
- Uses visual cues to enhance written and oral language communication in the discipline. |
COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE GROUNDED IN THE CORE AND REINFORCED IN THE DISCIPLINE

Example:
Learning Outcomes Based Core Curriculum/Discipline Specific Program Supports Student Enrollment, Retention, Persistence, and On-Time Degree Completion

Focuses on pre-assessment, post-assessment, and reduction in core credit hours allowing us to meet students where they are and better serve them leading to improved student learning outcomes and graduation rates.

Reduces the number of core curriculum hours thus facilitating student transfers from two-year institutions without extending their time to bachelor’s degree completion at CAU. The old CAU core requirements compelled transfer students to complete ~40 credit hours of core before focusing on their major. Thus, the old CAU core requirements impeded student transfers from 2-year institutions to CAU.

Allows for the development and implementation of academic degree programs and experiences with improved program relevance leading to better job placement of, and/or further advanced study by, CAU students.
Each degree program will include a minimum of 30 and maximum of 36 credit hours to meet General Education requirements; however, each department may define additional degree-related course requirements that include courses that meet General Education requirements but are not counted in the 30 – 36 credit hours (e.g., computer science may require additional mathematics core courses). Each degree program of study, may include non-course experiences and will ensure that opportunities are provided for meeting all learning outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities/Fine Arts</td>
<td>3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science/Mathematics/Statistics</td>
<td>3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial/Quantitative/Technological</td>
<td>3-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Freshmen and transfer seminar are not counted in the 30 - 36 credit hours of the General Education requirement. (122 credit hours for a degree include the 2 credit hours of freshmen seminar.)
TRANSFORMING LIVES: ADVANCING STUDENT ACADEMIC AND CAREER SUCCESS
Curriculum Focused on Developing Independent Learners and Training and Motivating Active and Concerned Global Citizens

Goal: Graduates who are independent learners and who seek to make a difference in their world through actions and ideas that matter.
Curriculum Focused on Developing Independent Learners and Training and Motivating Active and Concerned Global Citizens

**WE TRANSFORM LIVES**

**WE IGNITE NEW POSSIBILITIES**

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**UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION AT CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY: ADVANCING INNOVATION, MOTIVATION, AND SUCCESS (AIMS)**

**Goal:** To produce graduates who are independent thinkers and who seek to make a difference in their world through actions and ideas that matter.

**GOAL**

- Continual Improvement
  - Assessments of Student Learning
  - Evaluation of Program Activities
  - Review of Academic Programs
  - Evaluation of Success Metrics

- **New Curriculum (122 credit hours)**
  - New Degree Plans (51 Hours)
  - New General Education Core (30-36 Hours)
  - Stackable Credentials (9-12 Hours)
  - Minor (18-21 Hours)
  - First-Year Seminar (2 Hours)

- **Program Alignment for Students**
  - Academic Roadmaps
  - Course Rotation Maps
  - Cross-departmental Curricular Review
  - Student-centered Teaching Approaches
  - Educational Objectives
  - Major and Career Pathway Exploration
  - Finish-in-Four Programs
  - Learning Programs

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**Student Development and Coaching**

- Advising
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Tutoring
- Advocating

**Technology**

- Networking
- Research Insights
- Best Practices
- Analytics

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December 2018
3 years ago, all CAU academic departments and programs were tasked to redesign and streamline their Academic Plans of Study, including a complete redesign of the undergraduate core curriculum.

We “reimagined” what a 21st century university graduate needed to be competitive in their chosen fields.
“EVOLUTION” …

TO MEET THE NEW CHALLENGES OF A REVIVED GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

University Appointments:

• General Education Core Curriculum Faculty Coordinator – Dr. Alicia Simon from the Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice.
  • A new position was created to provide oversight and direction for the CAU General Education Curriculum from a “faculty” perspective.

• Revitalized GECC (General Education Curriculum Committee) – The new GECC is comprised of administrators and faculty who will assist with oversight and implementation of structures and best practices designed to “evolve” all aspects of the new GE Curriculum.
“E VOLUTION” ...

CAU DEvised A 6-STeP INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT & IMPROVEMENT PROCESS
“EVOLUTION” ...

**THE GECC & OPAR DEVISED A GE CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT PLAN**

Fall 2017 – An assessment plan was devised to track CAU GE Courses related to the 7 Core Learning Competencies & Student Learning Outcomes (SLO’s).
6 Clicks, *IMPROVE* and the General Education Response Process:

- Fall 2017 the GECC and OPAR implemented the following process to begin GE Assessment Data input.
- A “6 click” IMPROVE GE assessment data input process was created.
- GECC and OPAR Workshops were held to assist faculty with their data submissions.
- Spring 2018 GE Assessment data will be collected soon and our outcomes and findings will be reported.
- Student Learning Outcomes will be reviewed and we will use the data to continue the EVOLUTION of our General Education Curriculum.
CAU Administrators, Faculty and Academic Advisement Staff are invited for a day of information, brainstorming and collegiality to continue the “EVOLUTION” of the CAU General Education Curriculum

Spring 2017
Hosted by the Provost, the retreat highlighted General Education and the new GE Curriculum

Spring 2018
Hosted by the GECC, the upcoming Faculty retreat will focus on “The Evolution of the CAU General Education Assessment Process; Examining Strategies and Best Practices”
BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND – “COMPETING” …

USING BEST PRACTICES AND DATA TO REACH THE GOAL OF PREPARING 21ST CENTURY “COMPETITIVE” SCHOLARS

Assessing our General Education outcomes, remaining academically agile and providing cutting edge professional development to our GE faculty… will help CAU continue to REIMAGINE… EVOLVE… COMPETE.
CAU must focus on positively altering market perceptions of the ability of our graduates to generate knowledge value added ($KVA_{CAU}$) relative to job requirements ($KVA^*$) and the knowledge value added of graduates from peer schools ($KVA_{Peers}$).
NEW APPROACH TO CURRICULUM

Major Program (Synthesis)

Bandwidth

Undergraduate Research (MUSE)

Critical Thinking & Reasoning

Behavioral, Social and Career Development Skills

Competency Based Major*

CAU Stackable Credentials

QEP

The New Core

CAU First-Year Experience

* Competency Based Majors involve hands-on experience: Academic Excellence in National Security Studies, Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development, Functional Nanoscale Materials, High Performance Polymers and Composites, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development, Undergraduate Research and Creativity, CAU-TV, and WCLK.
Goal: Increase the KVA of CAU graduates through Stackable Competency-Based Credentials.

Stackable Credentials

Whichever way you look at it, the cards are stacked in the graduates favor.
THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

GOAL: Increase Student ROI Through a Holistic Approach

Student Dissatisfaction

Hygiene Factors:
- Campus Environment
- Convenience
- Financial Incentives
- JHJ School Environment
- Relationships with Peers, Practitioners, and the Organization
- Reputation of JHJ School Programs
- Security
- Student Life

Student Satisfaction

Motivation Factors:
- Academic Advancement
- Empowerment
- Financial Success
- Interest and/or Motivation in Learning
- Job Opportunities
- Making a Difference
- Parental Advice
- Personal Goals
- Social Interaction with Other Students

Not Dissatisfied

Not Satisfied
THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

CAU’S HOLISTIC APPROACH

- Course Redesign and Adaptive Learning
- Predictive Analytics and Improved Academic Advising
- e-Portfolio
- Residence Life and Student Engagement
- Career Preparation and Employment
ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

GOAL: Increase Alumni Engagement to Build a Firm Foundation for Our Students’ Future

- Support Growth of Alumni Association
- Support Student Recruitment
- Support Student College Transition
- Support Internships, Career Guidance, and Permanent Job Opportunities
- Support Fund Development
**Impact on Advancing Academic and Career Success**

**Curriculum**
- Stackable Credentials – industry-recognized and respected credential... designed to strengthen labor market value for CAU graduates
- Positions students for enhanced professional career success in a changing global knowledge economy

**Building Pipelines**
- Reduction in general education/core courses creates a more transfer-friendly pathway
- Streamline ability to develop 2+2 articulation programs
- GE/core courses to transfer as a block and satisfy lower-division GE requirements

**Curricular Flexibility**
- Students now have more flexibility in the curriculum for exploration. There are an array of options that supports CAU students’ preparation, interests, and long-term goals.

**Co-curricular Enhancements**
- Developed a Health Professions Advisory Unit to support students in pursuing medical professions
- Developed Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) within the Residence Halls
- Leverage the e-Portfolios to document and promote deeper, richer student learning

**Student Success**
- Finish-in-Four Campaign that encourages students to take 15 or more credit hours per semester
- Mandatory academic advising workshops for juniors with 61-90 credits
- Course redesign involving foundational/gateway courses
- Academic advising structure and process to support the new curriculum

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December 2018

Clark Atlanta University
We thank the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) Career Pathways Initiative for support for this work.
QUESTIONS???
THANK YOU!