

UNI Foundational Inquiry Faculty Senate Report, April 27, 2026

Per the UNI Foundational Inquiry's Faculty Senate charter, this report summarizes the work the committee has accomplished this academic year, along with directions for future progress as the program grows to serve faculty, staff, and students.

GENERAL UPDATES

1. Committee Charter

Two minor changes are being made to the charter governing the UNIFI committee in the Faculty Senate Handbook. First, after consulting with Continuing & Distance Education, it was determined that they no longer need to be represented by a non-voting liaison; instead, when the UNIFI committee takes up any topic that involves Continuing & Distance Education, someone from that office will be invited to attend the relevant meeting. Second, after consulting with the Office of Undergraduate Studies, it was determined that the Director of Civic Education will serve as a non-voting liaison on the committee.

2. Professional Development

UNIFI continues to partner with the CETL in some of its professional development offerings. This semester we launched the UNIFied Academy, a paid professional development opportunity focused on the general education program at UNI. The Academy has brought together ten faculty from across campus to meet five times over the course of the spring semester for a series of collegial conversations based on *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* by Susan Ambrose, et al. The goal of the Academy is to elevate teachers who make UNIFI thrive, to share their collective wisdom with UNIFI faculty as a whole, and ultimately to improve the general education experience for UNI students. The UNIFied Academy curriculum, facilitated by Jonathan Chenoweth and Jeremy Schraffenberger, is an experience that we propose to serve as the core curriculum for a newly proposed UNIFI teaching credential.

UNIFied Academy participants will be part of the Fall 2026 return of [Panther Partners](#), a program that will pair faculty members with student consultants to offer a student's perspective on their UNIFI class. In addition, they will participate in a peer-review of their UNIFI course design. Finally, in Fall 2026 they will be asked to participate in a roundtable conversation to report back to colleagues on campus about their experiences in the Academy.

3. UNIFI Strategic Plan

The UNIFI committee has discussed making some improvements to the program that would make it more effective and more efficient. One such improvement is the possibility of introducing a new requirement in the form of a Big Questions course, an inquiry-based

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seminar that would include SLOs 1, 2, and 3 and be designed for inter-, cross-, or multidisciplinary work. We are still in the early stages of developing this idea, but we have held both student and faculty focus groups. A campus-wide survey will be distributed in the next academic year. The UNIFI committee is committed to making this change only if there is a will on campus to do so and if it can be demonstrated that it would be revenue-neutral.

In addition to the Big Questions course, the UNIFI committee has also reviewed the wording of the current Student Learning Outcomes. SLO 2 Written Communication was revised from “Write effectively” to “Write effective prose that demonstrates critical reading, textual analysis, and evidence-based argument.” The reasoning for making this change is 1. to reflect the current practice of artifacts collected for assessment, and 2. to highlight the importance of critical reading as part of the process of writing. The committee continues to explore ways to improve SLOs, discussing ways to integrate Information Literacy either as a new SLO or as part of a current learning area.

CURRICULUM UPDATES

1. New Courses

This academic year nine new courses were introduced into multiple learning areas.

In Responsibility, we added the following:

ENGLISH 3110 Environmental Literature

LIBRARY 2300 Beyond the Hype: Artificial Intelligence as Information:
Responsibility

PHIL/RELS 1070 Ethics in the Age of AI: Responsibility

RELS 2400 Religious Freedom in America Responsibility

In Human Expression, we added the following:

LRNTECH 2200 Gamecraft: From Mechanics to Meaning

In Human Condition Domestic, we added the following:

LRNTECH 1200 Playgrounds to Pixels: Meaningful Gaming

In Human Condition Global, we added the following:

POLSCI 1025 Global Politics

HIST 2310 From Mesopotamia to the Middle Ages: The Premodern West

HIST 2320 The Modern West: Technology, Science, & Culture

In Quantitative Reasoning, we added the following:

STAT 1780 Introduction to Data Science: Quantitative Reasoning

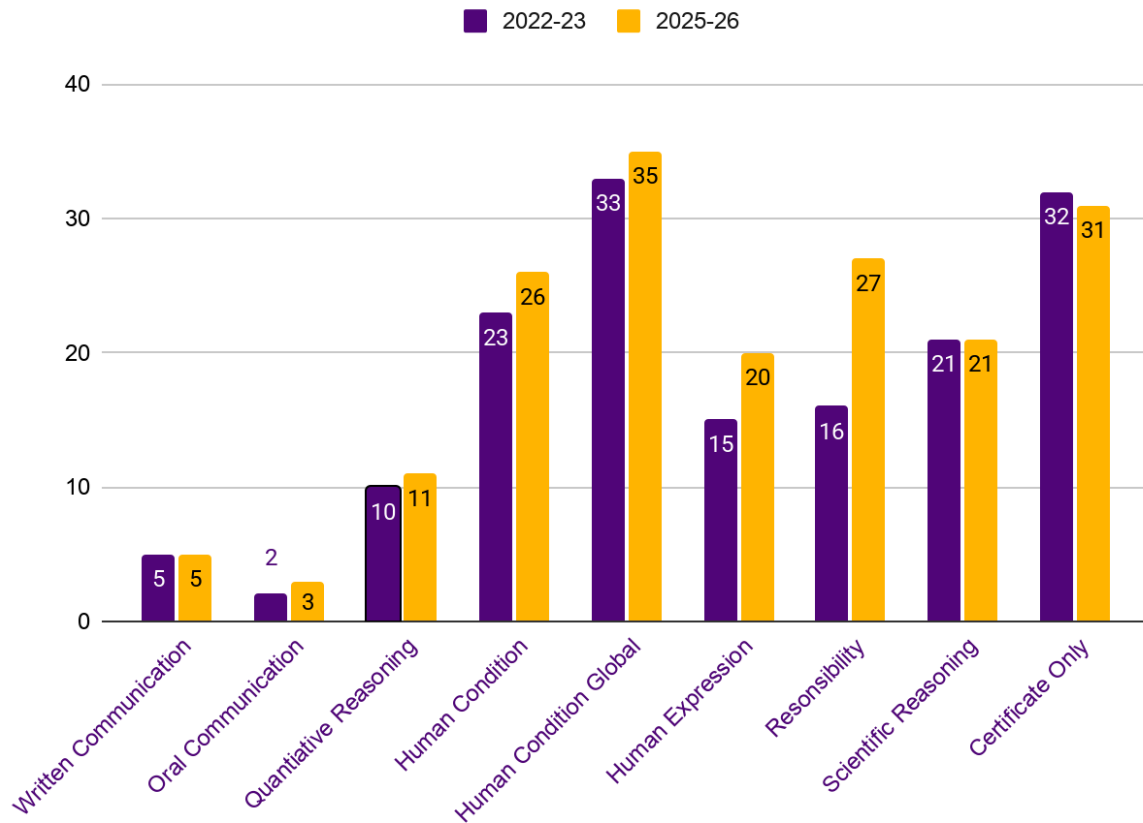
In the Certificate-Only Connect Elective category, we added the following:

POSTSEC 2000 Supporting Students in Collegiate Environments

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For context, below is a chart showing the total number of current courses in each UNIFI learning area compared with the totals from the 2022-23 academic year when the program was launched. The learning areas with the most growth are Human Expression (6 additional courses) and Responsibility (11 additional courses).

UNIFI Courses from 2022-23 to 2025-26



2022-23 Total UNIFI Courses: 157

2025-26 Total UNIFI Courses: 179

ASSESSMENT UPDATES

For the 2025-26 academic year, the UNIFI committee focused on improving the rubrics used for assessment based on the collective feedback from those who had used the previous rubrics. The newly revised rubrics have been used to assess artifacts by a group of members of the UNIFI Committee to test feasibility and check for errors.

The following are changes that have been made across all rubrics:

- New rubrics are individual and editable as MS Word documents; old rubrics were in a packet saved as.pdf format.
- Format of rubrics changed to incorporate half-steps for scoring.
- Scoring category of N/A added to rubrics to distinguish between absence due to low student performance (score of 0) and absence due to not being asked for in assignment (score of N/A).
- Headings formatted for clarity.

The following are changes that have been made for individual rubrics:

SLO 1 Moderate Changes

Reordered, renamed criteria, evaluation language streamlined while preserving critical thinking structure.

SLO 2 Moderate Changes

Clarified separation of and reordered Source Selection and Use of Sources, expanded genre conventions for more clarity.

SLO 3 Major Changes

Original rubrics had two rubrics (one for certificates), changed to be just one rubric. Substantial redesign of categories to reflect how UNI students do oral presentations, removes civic communication and integrates information use.

SLO 4 Minor Changes

Reordering of categories and wording clarified.

SLO 5 Moderate Changes

Categories streamlined, civic engagement language simplified, condensation of team climate descriptors.

SLO 6 Minimal Changes

Language clarified.

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SLO 7 Minimal Changes

Language clarified.

SLO 8 Minor Changes

Criteria clarified and language refined.

SLO 9 Minor Changes

Creation language clarified, originals emphasized visual arts so performance language added.

SLO 10 Minimal Changes

Minor wording edits.

SLO 11 Minimal Changes

Minor wording edits.

SLO 12 Moderate Changes

Criteria reordered, framework language used for clarity, terminology refined.

This report is respectfully submitted by Don Gaff, Associate Professor of Anthropology and UNIFI Assessment Coordinator; and Jeremy Schraffenberger, Professor of English and UNIFI Curriculum Coordinator.