General education. If you’re like me and probably millions of other college graduates, you probably don’t remember much about your general education. Sure, I remember certain things about certain classes, and I certainly remember all those boxes I had to check off as I earned my way to my degree, but I’d be lying to you if I looked back and said I saw meaning, purpose or really understood what general education was about. Now don’t get me wrong, there’s likely value in the general education that I had, and it probably shaped who I am today, but I can tell you when I engaged with general education as an undergraduate, I really didn’t understand the purpose or the why.

Now guided pathways at Laramie County Community College is changing a lot around the student experience, but I want to talk about the change in the experience that students will have as they enter their general education. We’re hitting the reset button on general education at LCCC, and we’re starting with competencies, not courses. Using the wonderful framework that’s been provided through the Association of American Colleges and Universities LEAP program augmented by the Interstate Passport Project, we’ve identified key competencies that we know are important for students to succeed in their work and in their general life, and that’s where we’re starting.

Now, when I started college, and I went into general education, I couldn’t see how general education connected. I didn’t know what the value was or why it was important for me to actually engage in that. We’re changing that at LCCC. Now in their first semester with us as part of their student success course, we’re exposing them to general education from a competency perspective. They get to explore and understand and ultimately articulate why those competencies will be essential for them to succeed in the future and be able to articulate that to their fellow students, but it doesn’t stop there.

As they engage in the curriculum, a reminder of those competencies, why they’re developing them and specifically what they’re going to do for them will carry throughout the curriculum. They will document and archive products of their learning that demonstrate achievement of those competencies so they can share those with future employers or future educators.

Now, one of the things we want to make sure that we do at LCCC is also provide coherence across general education. While our competencies include those things like written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, we also know that there are certain things that students need to be able to do regardless if they’re engaging in math or English. So across all general education coursework we’ve integrated what we call the four crosscutting practices.

In every course, from music appreciation to college algebra, students will engage in practices of exploration, research and problem solving, of creativity and innovation, practices of integrity and empathy, and practices of communication and collaboration. In today’s world anybody can look up information on the internet on a website. Our employers, our communities, and educators are all looking for something else in our students. We want students who can be creative, solve problems, work together, understand how to navigate complex, difficult, and stressful environments.

With the new general education framework at LCCC, combined with those four crosscutting practices, we believe we’re providing an opportunity for students to develop, articulate, and ultimately utilize some of the best general education skills and competencies that this world needs, and it is fundamentally changing their experience at our college. Thank you.

**[END OF FILE]**