

A Proposal to Restructure General Education at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

Developed By: University General Education Core Curriculum Committee February 6, 2018

Approved By: University Course and Programs Committee (UCPC) March 16, 2018

UCPC Recommendations

- Provide the proposed General Education Curriculum to the Curriculum Committee of each college, for review and comment.
 - It is expected that the review/comment period will take place between **April 2, 2018** and **April 27, 2018**.
 - The University General Education and Core Curriculum Committee will have representatives, as needed, available to meet with college Curriculum Committees.
 - Comments received from reviews by college Curriculum Committees will be available to the Faculty Senate for consideration at its May 2, 2018 meeting.

- Should the proposed General Education Curriculum be approved/passed by the Faculty Senate, the General Education and Core Curriculum Committee will present an update on implementation activities to the University Course and Programs Committee during a UCPC meeting in the Fall 2018 semester.

NOTES

It is anticipated that, should the Faculty Senate approve/pass the proposed General Education Curriculum:

- implementation of the curriculum will begin with the **Fall 2020** semester.

- the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will charge the University General Education Core Curriculum Committee with the development of an *Implementation Roadmap*, which identifies processes, milestones, and outcomes necessary to fully implement the General Education Curriculum.
 - Execution and oversight of activities associated with the *Implementation Roadmap* may involve the Faculty Senate, the University General Education Core Curriculum Committee, the Provost's Office, or some combination thereof.

A Proposal to Restructure General Education at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

The University General Education Core Curriculum Committee proposes a restructuring of the General Education Curriculum for the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. To earn a baccalaureate degree, each student will be required to accomplish the six goals described in this document and achieve the learning outcomes associated with each goal. The learning indicators will be used as criteria by the committee to certify courses or sequences of courses as giving students the opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes.

Some prefatory notes

- The primary goal of the multi-year project represented here has been to re-shape and re-package the University General Education Core Curriculum so that it represents undergraduate student learning goals and learning outcomes, rather than a simple distribution of courses. Ideally, by understanding the re-packaged curriculum, students will be more equipped to understand *why* they are being asked to complete General Education courses—that is, to comprehend what they are expected to learn and accomplish in General Education.
- The entire project was undertaken by the University General Education Core Curriculum Committee, appointed by the Faculty Senate.
- To earn a baccalaureate degree, students will still need to complete the state-mandated 35-hour State Minimum Core. To accommodate academic programs that have a “tight curriculum”—that is, with few or no elective hours—courses can be designed that will allow students to accomplish Learning Goals 1 through 5 by completing the State Minimum Core at the University of Arkansas.
- The University General Education Core Curriculum Committee will re-certify courses to be included in the General Education Core using the Learning Indicators described in this document.
- Students completing Learning Goals 1 through 5 will have the opportunity to “double-dip” with some courses—that is, some courses will be approved that can meet more than one Learning Outcome: Courses meeting Learning Outcome 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, or 3.4 can be designed so that they also meet Learning Outcome 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, or 5.1. Courses meeting Learning Outcome 4.1, 4.2, or 5.1 can be designed to meet Learning Outcome 1.2. Alternatively, departments and programs may develop “stand-alone” courses that meet Learning Outcome 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, or 5.1.
- A revised undergraduate catalogue will contain a matrix describing which courses have been approved to meet which Learning Outcome.
- To help students develop the mindset that will be necessary to complete Learning Outcome 6.1, the University General Education Core Curriculum Committee, the Academic Advising Council, and the Provost’s office are collaborating to initiate a campus-wide discussion about student e-portfolios.

GOAL 1: Strengthen written, oral, and multimodal communication abilities.

Requires three courses, two (**State Core - English**) that are included in the University of Arkansas' State Minimum Core menu and that meet the criteria associated with Learning Outcome 1.1, and one (**New Requirement**) that meets the criteria associated with Learning Outcome 1.2 and that can be either a course or approved sequence of courses specifically focusing on the teaching of writing, speaking, and/or multimodal communication or a course or approved sequence of courses containing sufficient elements for it to qualify as writing-, speaking-, or multimodal communication-intensive.

Learning Outcome 1.1: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to write clear, correct, and effective prose, crafted to achieve a range of purposes and address a variety of audiences, incorporating and citing sources gathered from primary (observational) or secondary (bibliographic) research.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 1.1:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course must accomplish all five of the following learning indicators. In an approved course or students will:

- a. focus primarily on how to generate written texts, receiving explicit instruction in how to analyze audiences and rhetorical situations, how to follow the examples of model texts, and how to revise.
- b. complete at least four substantial writing assignments and produce at least 5000 words of prose.
- c. incorporate specific feedback into their writing, in order to help them revise and edit for clarity, force, and correctness.
- d. critically analyze the effectiveness of written prose.
- e. incorporate and cite sources gathered from primary (observational) or secondary (bibliographic) research in their writing.

Learning Outcome 1.2: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to communicate with a variety of audiences not only in writing but also by speaking and using a range of electronic and digital modes.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 1.2:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course or approved sequence of courses must accomplish all five of the following learning indicators. In an approved course or approved sequence of courses, students will:

- a. engage primarily in learning how to generate written, spoken, or multi-media presentations, receiving explicit instruction in how to analyze audiences and rhetorical situations, how to follow the example of model presentations, and how to revise.
- b. complete at least 12 pages of prose collected in at least three assignments or at least three oral or multi-media presentations that last a total of at least 20 minutes or some combination of written, oral, or multi-media presentations that constitute a commensurate amount of student work.
- c. integrate effective content to be presented in a written, oral, or multi-media presentation that is appropriate to a specific context, audience, and purpose.
- d. incorporate specific feedback into written, oral, or multi-media presentations, revising and editing them for clarity, force, and correctness.
- e. incorporate and cite sources gathered from primary (observational) or secondary (bibliographic) research in written, oral, or multi-media presentations.

GOAL 2: Build core skills of quantitative literacy.

Requires one (**State Core - Math**) course that meets the criteria associated with Learning Outcome 2.1.

Learning Outcome 2.1: Upon reaching this goal, students will have the ability and habit of mind to search out quantitative information, critique it, reflect upon it, and apply it in their public, personal, and professional lives; formulate decisions and problem solving based on critical reasoning and analysis; synthesize

quantitative information from a variety of sources to solve problems and interpret results; perform and solve basic function operations, and solve algebraic problems using appropriate vocabulary.

Learning indicators for Learning Outcome 2.1:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course must incorporate all five learning indicators. In an approved course, students will:

- a. employ college-level algebraic concepts and tools
- b. apply these tools to other subject areas and real-life problems
- c. formulate and solve quantitative problems in mathematical terms, using appropriate tools and methods
- d. use mathematical computation involving integers, rational numbers, algebraic expressions, decimals, ratios, percentages, roots, and powers
- e. express quantitative and logical ideas with precision, using the language and notation of mathematics

GOAL 3: Develop a working knowledge of how scholars and artists think and act in fundamental areas of study.

Requires seven courses, one each that meet Learning Outcome 3.1 (State Core – Fine Arts) and Learning Outcome 3.2 (State Core – Humanities), three that meet Learning Outcome 3.3 (State Core – Social Sciences), and two that meet Learning Outcome 3.4 (State Core – Science).

Learning Outcome 3.1: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to articulate and apply concepts from one of the fine and/or performing arts.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 3.1:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course must incorporate at least three of the five learning indicators. In an approved course, students will:

- a. synthesize the development over time of the fundamental concepts, principles, theories, and methods, creative practices and techniques of the visual and/or performing arts.
- b. develop an understanding of how historical, social, cultural, and personal forces shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn share the diverse cultures of past and present societies.
- c. respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work in the creative discipline being introduced to other aspects of human thought and endeavor.
- d. through written, oral, and/or graphic techniques of communication, analyze and interpret works of fine and performing arts using appropriate critical language, and identifying the visual, sensory, environmental, and psychological characteristics that they observe.
- e. understand and use materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

Learning Outcome 3.2: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to articulate a minimum of three vital concepts of aesthetic, humane, and ethical sensibilities embodied in the humanities.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 3.2:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course must incorporate at least three of the five learning indicators. In an approved course, students will:

- a. identify fundamental concepts, structures, themes, and principles of the discipline being introduced
- b. analyze texts and other created artifacts using theories and methods of the discipline
- c. produce a reasonable short essay about the material introduced in the course
- d. interpret texts and other created artifacts within multiple historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts
- e. draw connections among cultural achievements of various groups of people of different ethnicities, religious backgrounds, racial origins, and sexual identities

GOAL 3: Develop a working knowledge of how scholars and artists think and act in fundamental areas of study. (continued)

Learning Outcome 3.3: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to articulate and use the basic principles of human interactions—of individuals, groups, and institutions—in a variety of contexts.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 3.3:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course must incorporate at least three of the five learning indicators. In an approved course, students will:

- a. articulate the key concepts, principles, and overarching themes to a social science discipline.
- b. apply social scientific reasoning and techniques.
- c. analyze theories, data, and methods of a social science discipline to explain individual, group, and institutional interactions.
- d. apply critical thinking and use scientific reasoning to evaluate claims about the social world.
- e. integrate and use evidence-based theories to explain various types of human interaction through written and oral communication.

Learning Outcome 3.4: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to articulate and use, through experiment and observation, the basic principles that govern natural phenomena.

Learning Indicators for Outcome 3.4:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course or approved sequence of courses must incorporate at least 3 of the 5 learning indicators. In an approved course or approved sequence of courses, students will:

- a. identify the fundamental concept(s) unifying a scientific discipline
- b. apply the principles of scientific theory and technique
- c. evaluate the credibility and use of scientific information
- d. make evidence-based arguments to support conclusions
- e. integrate and organize information, concepts, and applications relevant in more than one scientific discipline

GOAL 4: Expand diversity awareness, intercultural competency, and global learning.

Requires one course (**New Requirement**) that meets Learning Outcome 4.1 and one course (**New Requirement**) that meets Learning Outcome 4.2.

Learning Outcome 4.1: Upon reaching this goal, students will have developed knowledge and abilities aimed at interacting appropriately within intercultural contexts and engaging with complex global systems and issues.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 4.1:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course or approved sequence of courses must incorporate at least three of the five learning indicators. In an approved course or approved sequence of courses, students will:

- a. examine and interpret an intercultural experience from both one's own and another's worldview.
- b. articulate the essential tenets of a cultural worldview other than one's own through an analysis of its components, including but not limited to history, values, communication styles, politics, economy, and beliefs and practices.
- c. identify and participate in cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication.
- d. identify and analyze significant global challenges and opportunities in the human and natural world.
- e. identify and analyze the historical and/or contemporary interrelationships among multiple global cultures.

Learning Outcome 4.2: Upon reaching this goal, students will have developed familiarity with concepts of diversity in the United States.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 4.2:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course or approved sequence of courses must incorporate at least three of the five learning indicators. In an approved course or approved sequence of courses, students will:

- a. identify and describe examples of historical and present day issues related to diversity and inclusion in the United States.
- b. explain the historical and/or contemporary construction of difference through analysis of power structures, privilege, and explicit or implicit prejudice, and their roles in fostering discrimination and inequalities in the United States, whether cultural, legal, political, or social.
- c. describe the advantages of inclusion by identifying and analyzing notions of inclusivity and pathways for cultivating inclusion at all levels of society, whether cultural, legal, political, or social.
- d. analyze the historical and/or contemporary development of group agency and assess its role in addressing discrimination and inequalities in the United States.
- e. demonstrate problem-solving and change management skills for achieving social equity.

GOAL 5: Demonstrate critical thinking and ethical reasoning.

Requires one course (**New Requirement**) that meets Learning Outcome 5.1.

Learning Outcome 5.1: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to demonstrate essential principles of critical thinking and ethical reasoning and apply them to the evaluation and construction of rational and moral arguments.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 5.1:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course or approved sequence of courses must incorporate at least three of the following five learning indicators. In an approved course or approved sequence of courses, students will:

- a. identify and describe key concepts and principles related to critical thinking.
- b. explain and contrast competing ethical theories, each of which articulates at least one principle for ethical decision-making
- c. use recognized principles of critical thinking or ethical reasoning to analyze, evaluate, and respond to rational and moral argumentation presented orally and/or in writing.
- d. describe key fallacies and identify them in context.
- e. demonstrate the use of recognized principles of critical thinking or ethical reasoning to construct complex rational and moral arguments orally and/or in writing.

GOAL 6: Gain the ability to synthesize, integrate, and apply knowledge developed throughout the undergraduate years.

Requires student work (New Requirement) that meets Learning Outcome 6.1

Learning Outcome 6.1: Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to reflect upon and explain how they use the skills and abilities embodied in Goals 1 through 5 in completing an integrative project in their major during their junior or senior year.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 6.1:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, an assignment must require the student, as part of a credit-bearing course, (a) to produce a significant written paper, as defined by his or her major, or an equivalent project incorporating performance and/or multi-modal text and/or images; and (b) to explain in an additional document of at least 1250 words the degree to which the completed assignment involves at least three of the following sets of skills and abilities:

- a. Written, oral, and/or multimodal communication abilities
- b. Quantitative literacy
- c. Characteristics of inquiry and action in the major *and* in one of the Learning Outcomes under Goal 3 besides the disciplinary area of the major
- d. Diversity awareness and/or intercultural competency
- e. Critical thinking and/or ethical reasoning