

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Mission

The GE program at Chico State prepares students for continual learning and application of knowledge to career as well as personal life. It provides the education necessary for success as a lifelong learner and civically engaged individual in the twenty-first century.

Strategy

Chico State students acquire a strong foundation in critical thinking, written and oral communication and the arts and sciences through inquiry about and engagement with the social and natural worlds we inhabit. This is achieved through study, reflection, synthesis and action related to knowledge from varied historical, cultural, scientific and political perspectives. In combination with the major field of study, GE completes the breadth of university education.

The GE Program incorporates and seeks to foster the values of:

Active Inquiry— a spirit of curiosity to ask questions, seek answers, contemplate, and pursue investigations with intellectual rigor, incorporating appropriate information technology, while making connections between cognitive and personal development, both inside and outside traditional instructional settings.

Personal and Social Responsibility— the knowledge to take responsibility for one's own life and actions, and to recognize opportunities and responsibilities to become engaged in our various local, regional, national communities.

Sustainability— an understanding of the environmental dynamics associated with human activities and of the value of balancing social justice and human economic demands with the Earth's ability to sustain biological and cultural diversity.

Diversity—an understanding of and facility with different intellectual viewpoints as well as the unique perspectives of others based on varied experiences, identities and social attributes.

Creativity—the generation of new ideas and original expressions in light of past innovations, traditions, and the history of ideas, accompanied by a willingness to take intellectual risks and consider novel approaches.

Global Engagement—the cultural, linguistic, and analytic skills necessary to understand and engage with diverse cultures, people, and the global marketplace, and to contribute as responsible global citizens.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Student Learning Outcomes for our General Education program flow from the recognition that certain essential intellectual and practical skills rest at the foundation of a high-quality General Education program. These include effective written and oral communication, critical thinking, and mathematical reasoning skills. Additional Student Learning Outcomes arise from the values that the program seeks to foster.

1. **Oral Communication:** Demonstrates effective listening and speaking skills necessary to organize information and deliver it effectively to the intended audience.
2. **Written Communication:** Demonstrates the ability to question, investigate and draw well-reasoned conclusions and to formulate ideas through effective written communication appropriate to the intended audience.
3. **Critical Thinking:** Identifies issues and problems raised in written texts, visual media and other forms of discourse, and assesses the relevance, adequacy and credibility of arguments and evidence used in reaching conclusions.
4. **Mathematical Reasoning:** Demonstrates knowledge of and applies mathematical or statistical methods to describe, analyze and solve problems in context.
5. **Active Inquiry:** Demonstrates knowledge of and applies research techniques and information technology appropriate to the intellectual and disciplinary context.
6. **Personal and Social Responsibility:** Articulates an understanding of democratic values, responsibilities, and processes and a disposition to engage in deliberation, dialogue and action within our varied communities.
7. **Sustainability:** Describes and explains the environmental dynamics associated with human activities, and assesses the value of balancing social and economic demands with the Earth's ability to sustain biological and cultural diversity.
8. **Diversity:** Demonstrates an understanding of and facility with different intellectual viewpoints as well as the unique perspectives of others based on varied experiences, identities and social attributes.
9. **Creativity:** Takes intellectual risks and applies novel approaches to varied domains.
10. **Global Engagement:** Demonstrates knowledge and skills necessary to engage global cultures and peoples.

ORGANIZATION OF CURRICULUM

The Curricular Organization of GE adheres to the articulated values, LEAP learning outcomes, and curricular requirements of Executive Order 1033 and thus insures transferability, but is defined more explicitly in this document to create a unique experience consistent with the Mission and Values of CSU, Chico. The program consists of 48 units—18 foundational units, 6 units of American institutions, and 24 units of pathway breadth that includes 9 upper division units. This program is intended to allow students more elective units, and to ensure that courses are accessible for student progress toward degree. Major Programs with over 60 units in the major or fewer than 6 units of free electives that wish to increase the required number of units in the major must have approval of Academic Senate. Departments and colleges that wish to participate in the GE program must offer their proposed courses every semester.

Foundation—18 units. Foundation classes are those in Oral Communication, Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Mathematics, and two Science courses, one in the Physical sciences and one in the Life sciences, each with a lab. Because Oral and Written Communication, Critical Thinking and Math prepare students for success in the subsequent Pathway, students must pass all of these courses with a C- or better. There will be no more than 7 courses offered for any foundation area. Foundation courses are not required to be associated with a breadth pathway, but pathways should include at least one foundation course in order to familiarize students with pathways early in their careers.

American Institutions— 6 units. One course in US History counting as an Area C course and one course in US Constitution, California State and Local Government counting as an Area D course from the departments of history and political science, respectively.

Foundation and American Institutions courses will need to identify which values and student learning outcomes of the GE program they address. Course links are encouraged. The proposal and/or elimination of courses from General Education must be advertised (e.g., through memos of intent) and approved by CAB.

Breadth Pathways and Minors

Pathways

Definition: A Pathway connects courses structurally in an intellectually cohesive course of study that explores an issue or area from a multidisciplinary perspective. Pathways must be broad enough to include different disciplines and narrow enough to maintain thematic cohesion. Pathways will be designed to provide the opportunity for both intellectual coherence and exploration. Students are encouraged, but by no means required, to take all of their breadth courses in a pathway. A student completing 18 or more units in a Pathway, including 9 units of upper division coursework within that pathway, is awarded an interdisciplinary minor.

Beyond the foundation level, each breadth Pathway will consist of 24 units or 8 courses—3 arts and humanities, 3 social science, 1 science, and 1 lifelong learning course in addition to at least one foundation course associated with the pathway. Each course in the pathway should address one or more of the Values described in the Mission and Values for GE at CSU, Chico. A department or equivalent unit may have no more than 3 courses in a given pathway.

Lower Division: Lower division courses in the pathway will address the disciplinary areas of the Arts, Humanities, 2 Social Sciences—Individual and Society and Societal Institutions, and Life Long Learning. Each lower division disciplinary area (e.g., Arts, Humanities, etc.) within a pathway will have no more than 3 possible course choices. However, a course may be offered in more than one pathway if it fits conceptually. To encourage the study of multiple languages and levels of language, all foreign languages courses (i.e. foreign languages as a whole) will count as one course toward the limit of three in the Humanities section in any given pathway.

Upper division: Each upper division portion of a given pathway will have a course from the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. One course will be the designated writing intensive capstone course. Students should be able to complete the university's diversity requirements (see below) in the Upper division portion of a given pathway. Each disciplinary area will include no more than 3 courses. Students must choose one pathway for the completion of their upper-division.

Minors

Upon completion of 18 units within one pathway, including nine units of upper division within the same pathway, students will be awarded an interdisciplinary GE minor. Only one of the Foundation Courses connected to a pathway may count toward the 18 unit minor.

Management of Breadth Pathways

There will be a minimum of 5 and no more than 7 Pathways. Each pathway will have a coordinator who will assure breadth and consistent thematic coherence.

The proposal of a new pathway or the elimination of a pathway will follow the normal procedures for the proposal or elimination of minors. Initial generation and approval of pathways will follow a timeline established by an Implementation Team, named by the Provost in consultation with the Academic Senate and other campus leadership. Because pathways are interdisciplinary, they must demonstrate sufficient cross-disciplinary support for successful implementation. The proposal and/or elimination of individual courses within a pathway must be advertised (e.g., through memos of intent) and approved by the GE Curriculum Advisory Board.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS ADDRESSED IN GE

Diversity Graduation Requirement

The principal goal of this requirement is for students to gain insight into intercultural relations and the variety of cultures and peoples present both in the United States and the world at large. This requirement will be met by taking two courses. Some pathways should include upper division courses that allow transfer students to complete this requirement without taking additional General Education courses.

Students must complete both of the following two aspects of the Diversity Requirement (two courses).

- one course that focuses on and contextualizes the experiences of one or more groups found in the U. S. that are distinct from the dominant U.S. culture; and
- one course that focuses on non-U.S. culture(s) distinct from the dominant U.S. and European experience

Courses that satisfy the Diversity Requirement must introduce and examine:

- basic concepts of intergroup and intercultural relations, such as racism, ethnocentrism, the impact of cultures on each other, perception, and the intersection of differing value systems and
- the intersection of ethnicity, language, or culture with gender, sexuality, class, or other important social categories, such as religion.

Students, after completing the diversity courses, will have knowledge of

- relationships among different ethnic groups;
- interactions, values, and perceptions of cultures distinct from the dominant U.S. and European cultures; and
- the social construction of class, race, ethnicity, or gender.

Capstone Graduation Requirement

Every student must take a GE capstone course that 1) integrates the different areas and disciplinary perspectives of a pathway, and 2) challenges students to synthesize and create new approaches or solutions to specific issues within the pathway. Capstones are writing intensive and must also integrate oral and written presentations of student work. Degree programs that offer major capstones that integrate different approaches, challenge students to synthesize information, and are writing intensive may, upon an approval process through CAB, count for the capstone requirement. Students then take three upper-division courses within a pathway without having to take an additional capstone.

Writing Requirements

Students must take at least 4 GE courses designated as Writing Intensive. The freshman course in Academic Writing and the capstone course count as two of these courses. Transfer students who have completed their lower division GE at another institution may fulfill the GE writing requirement by taking one Writing Intensive course in the Upper Division. These courses must have writing assignments in which students have the opportunity to improve their writing through a process of multiple drafts and editing, using effective writing pedagogy for a disciplinary area. Because these courses require additional work and pedagogical expertise on the part of the instructor, they will typically have no more than 30 students, unless the department can effectively demonstrate that they meet the writing “intensive” requirement using alternative classroom structures.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Capstone Substitution

Capstones –Major disciplines that have a required capstone course that includes components of integration, synthesis, and intensive writing may substitute their capstone for the GE capstone requirement with approval from CAB. Students will still need to complete the three upper division GE disciplinary requirements.

Major Fulfillment of GE Requirements

Major disciplines may apply to CAB to designate up to three GE requirements (in addition to the capstone) fulfilled upon completion of that major. Students who have completed these areas for a major and subsequently declare a different major may use the courses already taken to fulfill GE requirements.

Advanced Course Substitution

A student may substitute a more advanced course for a Foundation Course. For example, a student might take MATH 120, substituting it for a lower-level General Education mathematics course such as MATH 101. CAB will keep a running list of acceptable course substitutions and administer this process in consultation with appropriate disciplinary faculty.

Additional Waivers and Substitutions

The current program is designed to provide a rigorous, shared experience that is essential for liberal education in the 21st century. Given the built-in flexibility of the program, additional waivers or substitutions to the GE program are strongly discouraged. Per Executive Order 1033, high unit professional major degree programs may apply for additional waivers and substitutions from the Chancellor’s Office if they are first approved at the campus level. For such approval at CSU, Chico, programs must first demonstrate to CAB that a waiver or substitutions is necessary for the purpose of

program accreditation. Secondly, they must demonstrate that most other accredited programs in the discipline require the same number of major units. Finally, any proposed substitution must address the missions, goals, and student learning outcomes as specified in the GE program. These substitutions will be assessed as part of the GE program.

ADMINISTRATION OF GE

Assessment

Assessment of the GE program will be driven and guided by the program's Mission and Values, and the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) derived from these. The Mission of the GE program emphasizes a strong intellectual foundation, disciplinary knowledge, civic engagement and lifelong curiosity and learning about the social and natural worlds. The program's values of active inquiry, social responsibility, sustainability, diversity, creativity and global engagement serve to provide additional guidance regarding the essential qualities—and SLOs—for students completing the GE program. It is expected that students will experience the GE program as a structured, coherent sequential learning experience that provides grounding in the qualities elaborated in the Mission and Values. In addition, it is expected that Pathways will create a statement of how they demonstrate both breadth and coherence around core intellectual concepts that unite the courses found in a given Pathway. Pathways will assess their effectiveness in maintaining these core concepts and providing students with coherent exposure to these concepts.

CAB will charge Pathway coordinators, working with faculty teaching in the pathways, with regular assessment of GE program level outcomes as expressed in a given Pathway. CAB will designate a set of SLOs to be assessed each year. Pathway coordinators will work with faculty to determine an assessment plan that is accessible and efficient in assessing those SLOs that are under review.

Pathways are also responsible for maintaining and demonstrating their intellectual coherence and breadth. Pathway coordinators, in consultation with faculty teaching in the pathway, will report annually to CAB on steps taken to maintain coherence and breadth and demonstrated student learning.

Administrative Structure

CAB—Curriculum Advisory Board will be responsible for making recommendations to the Provost or designee on the implementation, monitoring, and development of the GE program. In consultation with appropriate disciplinary faculty, it is responsible for the coordination of assessment and the addition or deletion of individual courses as well as any proposed substitutions. Since CAB will advise the Provost on a major university program, it may either initiate advice or respond to requests for advice. This committee will comprise:

Five–Seven Pathway Coordinators. Pathway coordinators receive release time for overseeing the coherence and breadth of pathways and participation on CAB; a coordinator may also serve concurrently as an elected college representative (2 year, renewable)

Eight Faculty Representatives. One representative elected from each college and one from the library. (2 year, renewable rotating basis)

One selected from the Academic Senate's Educational Policies and Programs Committee (one year term, renewable twice)

Two ex-officio members -- one Provost designee and one member of the Academic Advising Programs

One student representative (1 year, renewable).

COB—Curriculum Oversight Board. Other administrative tasks associated with GE, such as ensuring adequate funding of the program, ensuring that courses are offered and space needs are met are ultimately the responsibility of the Provost. Functionally, these tasks, and appropriate consultation concerning them, will be handled by a committee of all college deans (or their designees), chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Education.

Initial Implementation of Program

During the transition to the new GE program outlined in this EM, the current administrative committee for General Education (GEAC) stands. GEAC will participate in the planning and approval of courses proposed for general education in coordination with an Implementation Team.

Upon the approval of this proposal as an Executive Memorandum, the Provost will form an Implementation Team through a consultative process that includes the Executive Committee of Academic Senate and other campus leadership. The team will be charged by the Provost to plan and carry out an effective and successful implementation process for the new curriculum, ensuring:

- consultation with administration, faculty, staff, and students to create an implementation process consistent with this EM and best practices exemplified at other institutions and in the literature on general education
- a transparent and equitable implementation process that is open to campus scrutiny, with appropriate deadlines for submission and evaluation of proposals for Pathways and courses that allows for the examination of any particular proposal in context of the entire program,

- the initial Pathway and course approval process is straightforward and reasonable for both those proposing courses and for those evaluating;
- that the implementation process and the new program receive adequate support for its success.
- there is a clear process and procedure for CAB to consider deletion and replacement of pathways.