

**Office of the President  
California State University, Chico**



**Executive Memorandum EM 18-005**

**March 13, 2018**

**From:** Gayle E. Hutchinson, President

**Subject:** General Education Program

Upon the recommendation of the Academic Senate and the concurrence of the Provost, I approve the General Education Program, effective immediately.

<b>Policy Title:</b>	EM 18-005 General Education Program
<b>Contact:</b>	
<b>Supersedes:</b>	EM 10-001
<b>Revision:</b>	
<b>Enabling Legislation or Executive Order:</b>	

**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, and international 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 physical and biological resources 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.

- **Oral Communication:** Demonstrates effective listening and speaking skills necessary to organize information and deliver it effectively to the intended audience.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning:** Demonstrates knowledge of and applies mathematical or statistical methods to describe, analyze and solve problems in context.

Additional Student Learning Outcomes arise from the values that the program seeks to foster.

- **Active Inquiry:** Demonstrates knowledge of and applies research techniques and information technology appropriate to the intellectual and disciplinary context.
- **Personal and Social Responsibility:** Demonstrates knowledge and skills necessary 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, and international communities.
- **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 physical and biological resources and cultural diversity.
- **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.
- **Creativity:** Takes intellectual risks and applies novel approaches to varied domains.

- 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 1100 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 open their courses to all students and offer their proposed courses every semester. If a department cannot offer a course every semester and has a set of complementary courses (e.g. Asian History and African History), it may propose a set of two GE courses, one to be offered only in fall and one to be offered only in spring.

GE courses will generally not have university-level prerequisites, unless the prerequisites derive from the GE Foundation.

### **Foundation - 18 Units**

The Foundation consists of one course each in Oral Communication, Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning, Physical Sciences, and Life Sciences. The courses in Physical and Life Sciences will have a lab component. Because Oral and Written Communication, Critical Thinking and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning prepare students for success in subsequent coursework, students must pass each 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 in a breadth Pathway, but Pathways should identify at least one foundation course in order to familiarize students with Pathways early in their careers. In accordance with EO 1110, students should enroll in Written Communication and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning courses during the first academic year, unless the requirement has been completed prior to entering the University. Foundation courses will identify which values and student learning outcomes of the GE program they address.

### **American Institutions - 6 Units**

One course in US History (also counting as a Humanities breadth course) and one course in US Constitution, California State and Local Government (also counting as a Societal Institutions breadth course) from the departments of history and political science, respectively.

American Institutions courses will identify which values and student learning outcomes of the GE program they address.

## **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 not required, to take all of their breadth courses in a Pathway.

Beyond the foundation level, each 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 must address one or more of the Values described in the Mission and Values for GE at CSU, Chico. All of the values of the GE program must be addressed within each Pathway, and each Pathway should also provide multiple opportunities for students to practice and apply their skills and knowledge obtained from the GE Foundation. A department or equivalent unit may have no more than 3 courses in a given Pathway. However, departments wishing to propose complementary courses may increase their limit of three courses within a Pathway to four, but may do so only once within a 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 Lifelong Learning. Each lower division disciplinary area (e.g., Lifelong Learning, 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, successful completion of any foreign language course may be used to fulfill the Humanities lower division breadth requirement. Foreign language courses do not count in the three-course limit in the lower division Humanities area Pathway.

*Upper division:* The upper division portion of each Pathway will consist of three 300-level courses, one each from the Arts/Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. Normally 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 GE requirement. Students may not use an upper division course for GE credit unless they have completed at least 45 semester units and all GE foundation requirements prior to enrolling in the course.

In this document, Honors versions of courses are not included in set limits.

### **GE 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 with the same name as the Pathway. Only one of the Foundation Courses connected to a Pathway may count toward the 18 unit minor.

## **Management of Pathways**

Normally there will be a minimum of 5 and no more than 10 Pathways. The number and thematic content of Pathways will be managed by the GE Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) in accordance with the following criteria: the need to meet student demand; the need to maintain coherence by limiting the total number of courses in GE; the quality of proposed Pathways; their ability to meet the values of GE; and their reflection of the diverse disciplines of the campus.

Each Pathway will have a Coordinator who will assure breadth and consistent thematic coherence. Pathway Coordinators will receive release time and will be elected by faculty members participating in the Pathway.

The proposal of a new Pathway or the elimination of a Pathway will follow the normal procedures for the proposal or elimination of minors. 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 (CAB).

Once a Pathway has been established, courses within a Pathway can be eliminated and new ones proposed through CAB.

*Experimental courses:* A category may be established to allow for experimentation and new courses in General Education. All of the guidelines for Pathway courses apply to experimental courses except for the following:

- Because this category will contain courses that are not organized around a common theme, students will not receive a minor through the completion of 18 units in this category.
- There will be no designated coordinator; the experimental courses will be administered and assessed annually by CAB.
- Experimental courses can be upper-division or lower-division. Students completing an upper-division experimental course must take their remaining upper-division GE courses in the same Pathway as each other.
- There can be no more than one experimental course per department.
- All courses proposed for this category will have a limit of three years, and at which time the course must find a home in a Pathway or exit the general education program.

## **OTHER REQUIREMENTS OVERSEEN BY THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM ADVISORY BOARD**

### *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 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
- 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
- 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
- The social construction of class, race, ethnicity, or gender

## **SUBSTITUTIONS**

### **Major Fulfillment of GE Requirements**

Major programs may apply to CAB to designate up to three GE requirements 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 Analytic Geometry and Calculus, substituting it for a lower-level General Education mathematics course such as MATH 101 Patterns of Mathematical Thought. 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 1100 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 present a reasonable case to CAB that a waiver or substitution is necessary for the purpose of program accreditation. CAB will consult with Senate on these exceptions. Finally, any proposed substitution must be consistent with the mission of the GE program and address the Student Learning Outcomes as specified in the first section of this document. These substitutions will be assessed as part of the GE program.

If a major program would prefer to keep the GE substitutions that it had as of Fall 2009, it may do so such that the total number of units contained in GE will not increase or decrease. The programs that opt to "grandfather" will follow the normal route for substitutions and waivers through CAB in the future.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF GE**

### **Administrative Structure**

The Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) 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:

- Eight Faculty Representatives - One representative elected by and from each college and one by and from the library Faculty representatives shall serve staggered, two-year, renewable terms.
- 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 faculty representative. Pathway Coordinators shall serve staggered, two-year, renewable terms.)
- One member selected from the Academic Senate's Educational Policies and Programs Committee (EPPC), who shall serve a one-year term, renewable twice.
- Two ex-officio members -- one Provost designee and one member of the Academic Advising Programs
- One student representative selected by the AS President, who shall serve a one-year renewable term.

The CAB chair will be elected annually from the faculty representatives and will receive release time for coordinating the committee's work.

### **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 chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Education.

### **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, personal and social responsibility, sustainability, diversity, creativity and global engagement serve to provide additional guidance regarding the essential qualities and Student Learning Outcomes 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.

This EM shall be reviewed beginning 5 years after implementation is complete and every 5 years thereafter.