Memorandum

May 23, 2019

TO: President Sakaki, Provost Vollendorf, and AVP of Academic Programs
           Karen Moranski

FROM: Laura A. Watt, Chair of the Faculty, and Jenn Lillig, Chair of EPC
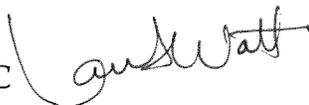
RE: GE Curricular Revision of 2019

We are pleased to present you with a substantial revision to our general education program at Sonoma State University. The faculty appointed to GERS as well as the GE Subcommittee and EPC worked tirelessly over 18 months to develop a general education curriculum which will have more meaning for students, be focused on student learning, and will be assessed in a regular basis for continuing refinement.

We believe the campus will be proud to show to WASC our success in creating a more coherent and meaningful GE program.

We send the GE curriculum revision to you for final approval. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us.

Enc.

SSU GE Program Statement of Purpose

The Sonoma State General Education (GE) Program provides students an intentional, coherent, inclusive undergraduate experience across multiple disciplinary perspectives, fostering broad transferable skills and integrated, engaged learning that position students to create and participate meaningfully and ethically in our interconnected and interdependent world. The GE program consists of a set of learning outcomes that are achieved through coursework in two areas: 1) GE content area distribution courses and 2) Seawolf studies, or overlay, courses.

Goals:

1. Coherent, intentional undergraduate experience
   - Creates an intentional program spanning the baccalaureate
   - Encourages students to be intentional about college, career, and lifelong learning
   - Prioritizes student development in an inclusive environment

2. Disciplinary perspectives
   - Introduces students to multiple disciplinary ways of knowing,
     - Supporting students in exploring, choosing, and affirming majors and areas of focus
     - Developing breadth of knowledge
   - Affords students the opportunity to practice knowledge-making
   - Expects understanding and appreciation of human diversity and multicultural perspectives

3. Broad transferable skills
   - Teaches academic skills, including
     - Written communication
     - Oral communication
     - Critical thinking and questioning
     - Quantitative reasoning
     - Information literacy
     - Cultural competency
   - Teaches life skills, including
     - Practicing collaboration
     - Engaging in problem-solving
     - Reading critically and digesting materials
     - Planning, organizing, and carrying through complex projects in a timely fashion
     - Cultivating an understanding and appreciation of social power and difference
   - Cultivates lifelong learning dispositions, including
     - Creativity
     - Curiosity
     - Flexibility
     - Reflection

- Challenge-seeking
- Persistence
- Inclusiveness

4. Integrated learning
    o Builds bridges between disciplines and schools
        - Synthesizing across general and specialized studies
        - Bringing multiple disciplinary perspectives to the students' programs of study
    o Teaches students to apply knowledge, skills, and multiple perspectives to new situations and problem-solving.
    o Encourages students to embrace ambiguity and appreciate/value difference

5. Engaged and real-world learning
    o Provides opportunities and encourages students to engage in hands-on learning and applications in and beyond the classroom.
    o Fosters social responsibility of individuals within diverse communities.

General Education Learning Outcomes

- **Critical Reading:** Actively analyze *texts* in a variety of forms, genres, and disciplines.

- **Information Literacy**: Iteratively formulate questions for research by gathering diverse types of information; identifying gaps, correlations, and contradictions; and using sources ethically toward a creative, informed synthesis of ideas.

- **Argument:** Advance cogent and ethical arguments in a variety of genres with rigor and critical inquiry.

- **Communication:** Communicate clearly and eloquently in written, oral, and/or performative forms in a variety of genres and disciplines.

- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Interpret, evaluate, and employ quantitative analysis and arguments.

- **Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Knowledge:** Identify, interpret, and apply methods, intellectual approaches, and fundamental concepts from disciplines within the social sciences, physical and life sciences, arts, and humanities.

- **Integration**: Synthesize and apply theoretical and practical perspectives from multiple disciplines to develop an understanding of complex issues.

- **Diverse Cultural Competencies:** Attain and apply knowledge of social power and difference in relations between self, other people, and social structures locally and nationally while honoring contributions of people of diverse identities.

- **Civic Responsibility:** Drawing on the past and present, develop knowledge and skills that promote active citizenship, with the capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in a democratic society.

- **Sustainable Development:** Explore past and present relationships among humans, societies, and environments to find new ways to cultivate a more secure and resilient future for all on our planet.

- **Global Awareness:** Develop knowledge of past and present political, economic, and cultural relations operating at international to global scale.

- **Creative Problem Solving:** Apply knowledge, skills, and multiple perspectives in new situations to analyze and formulate solutions to complex problems with confidence and creativity.

- **Creative Expression:** Produce new work through performance, design, construction, art, or creative writing that is characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and intellectual risk taking.

What Constitutes a GE Area Distribution Course?

Rationale

- Creating a meaningful program of General Education with clear differences between lower- and upper-division GE.
- Improve student access to courses, removing roadblocks to getting into GE courses.
- Distinguish between GE and major courses.
- Build in assessment of GE learning outcomes (see separate document on GELOs)
- Support faculty learning communities around General Education themes, pedagogies, and assessment without creating an undue burden on faculty

Policy

I. All GE courses must meet the following requirements:
    A. Area distribution courses must meet at least 3 GE Program Learning Outcomes which include but (are not limited to) the "must-have" matches defined in the mapping of area distributions to GE Learning Outcomes.

    B. GE courses must meet the Course Approval Criteria for the relevant GE distribution area.

    C. Be 3 units except combined 3 unit lecture and 1 unit laboratory courses and Upper Division courses specified in the "Met-in-Major" section below. Any other exceptions to the 3-unit requirement must be approved by Academic Programs, the GE Subcommittee, and EPC. Such exceptions must be based on standard CSU, California community college and nationwide practices for teaching the subject matter. In addition, once approved, exceptions (non-3-unit courses) will be scheduled after Academic Programs has determined there will be sufficient 3-unit course seat availability in the relevant GE area.

    D. Be suitable for students regardless of major.

    E. Include a signature assignment that can be mapped to the identified GE Learning Outcome(s) and which will be assessed using GELO rubrics and must be made available for GE assessment along with student artifacts.

    F. GE courses, including assessment data and faculty/department participation, are subject to review as part of the GE Program Review process.

II. In addition to these general requirements, all lower-division GE area distribution courses must
    A. Be introductory in nature (numbered 100-299) and promote exploration.

B. Explicitly describe to students the ways in which this course is disciplinary/reflects its discipline.

C. Require no special prerequisites, unless the course is part of a specific course sequence approved by the GE Subcommittee. Examples of such sequences might include high school pattern requirements and introductory language courses. In addition, a lower-division GE course may require completion of one or more of the Golden 4 GE distribution areas (A1, A2, A3, and B4).

D. Be open to students in all programs. Departments or units shall not reserve seats in LD GE courses. Exceptions must be approved by EPC and Academic Programs. Departments or units should consult with Academic Programs to request exceptions to this provision and determine how best to communicate any approved exceptions clearly.

E. Recommend every instructor teaching a LD GE area distribution course to participate in a designated GE professional development workshop or faculty learning community prior to or during their first semester teaching a GE course in the new program as the revised areas are implemented.

III. In addition to the general requirements, all UDGE area distribution courses must
   A. Be numbered 300-499.

   B. Be open to students in all programs, except as specified in "Met-in-Major" GE below. Other than met-in-major courses, upper-division GE courses may not be restricted to specific programs.

   C. Have prerequisites of the Golden 4; the Lower-Division GE course in the same GE area as the course being taken; and at least 45 completed units. Departments shall not impose additional prerequisites unless approved by the GE Subcommittee, EPC, and Academic Programs or unless the course is "Met-in-Major."

   D. Include the "Integration" outcome among the GE Learning Outcomes addressed by the course.

   E. Have an explicitly integrative component. For example, this

component may integrate multiple disciplinary perspectives; connect classroom and community/real-world learning; integrate theory and practice, etc.

F.   Include a reflection assignment that asks students to integrate knowledge gained in lower-division GE courses and reflect on the learning they have done across those GE courses. This assignment may be the same as or different from the reflection included in signature assignment, and must be made available for GE assessment along with student artifacts.

G.   Recommend every instructor teaching a UD GE area distribution course to participate in a designated GE professional development workshop or faculty learning community prior or during their first semester teaching a GE course in the new program as the revised areas are implemented.

IV.   Students may use GE area distribution courses to satisfy multiple requirements both in and outside of GE.

V.   Programs may designate specific courses in the major that satisfy UDGE for majors only.

   A.   These "Met-in-Major" UDGE courses

      1.   Must meet all of the requirements for UDGE courses in terms of learning outcomes, integration, assignments, assessment, and professional development.

      2.   May be restricted to majors/minors or hold a significant number of seats for majors/minors.

      3.   May be of any unit value, but no more than 3 units will apply to the relevant GE area.

      4.   Must enforce, at a minimum, the prerequisites required of other upper-division GE courses. May have additional prerequisites beyond this minimum.

      5.   Will not be listed in the GE pattern visible to all students.

      6.   May count for the major/minor and GE, and may be used to meet overlays if approved to do so.

   B.   Programs must choose at most one UD GE Area (B, C, or D) in which to offer "Met-in-Major" courses to students in a given major. This does not preclude departments from offering UD GE courses

in any UD GE Area (B, C, or D) that are open to all students.

C. Programs may designate multiple courses as "Met in Major" in order to ensure that every student in the program has the opportunity to take such a course. Students will be allowed to take up to 3 units of UD GE as "Met in Major" per major.

D. The "Met-in-Major" UDGE course program will be subject to review at the next GE Program Review (in 2022-23). At that time, the GE subcommittee and EPC will make a determination about whether to continue this part of the UDGE program, or to have all UDGE open to all students regardless of major. This decision will be based on assessment data from this program, including a study of how the GE experience and outcomes are affected by the mix of disciplines represented among the students.

GE Area Distribution Pattern + Overlay Requirements

GE Area Distribution Pattern:

Area: English Language Communication and Critical
Thinking Oral Communication (A1)   3 units
Written Communication (A2)   3 units
Critical Thinking (A3)   3 units

Area: Scientific Inquiry and Quantitative Reasoning
Physical Science (B1)   3 units
Life Science (B2)   3 units
Lab Activity (B3) (as standalone course or   1 unit (with B1 or B2) 3 units
combined)   3 units
Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning (B4)
Upper Division Physical and Life Science (B)

                                                 3 units Humanities:
Area: Arts and Humanities   Literature, 3 units 3 more units in
Arts: Arts, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theatre (C1)   either Arts 3 units
Philosophy, Languages (C2)   3 units
or Humanities (C)
Upper Division Arts and Humanities (C)

                                                 9 units (in at least 2 different
Area: Social Sciences
Lower Division Social Sciences (D)   3 units
disciplines)
Upper Division Social Sciences (D)
Area: Lifelong Learning and Self-Development
Lower Division Lifelong Learning/Self-Development (E) 3 units

Overlay Requirements: (units may be in GE area, major, or elective)

1. GWAR (two choices- pick one):
   - Writing Intensive Course (WIC)   3 or 4 units (upper division)
   - WEPT   0 units

2. American Institutions (two courses- take both):
   - U.S. History   3 or 4 units
   - Constitution and American Ideals   3 or 4 units

3. Critical Race Studies   3 or 4 units

4. Two choices- pick one:
   - Sustainability and Environmental Resilience 3 or 4 units
   - Global Awareness   3 or 4 units

Seawolf Studies (Overlay) Graduation Requirements

The Seawolf Experience cuts across the entire college career, encouraging students to explore different disciplines and interests and to integrate ideas and knowledge from many parts of their education. As part of that curriculum, these overlay courses ensure that students complete courses (or a relevant educational experiences) in areas that reflect state-wide and campus-wide core values as an essential part of our students' education. There are currently four areas with requirements that students must meet:

- GWAR (1 course or exam)
- American Institutions (2 courses)
- Critical Race Studies (1 course)
- Sustainability and Environmental Resilience OR Global Awareness (1 course)

Courses certified as meeting the Seawolf Studies (overlay) requirements must meet the "must-have" GE learning outcome, may be upper or lower division, may also be in the GE Area Distribution and/or in a major or minor, and/or may be electives. Individual courses may meet multiple requirements. Overlay courses must meet the Course Approval Criteria for the relevant overlay area (and GE Distribution Area when applicable).

Seawolf Studies Graduation Requirement Areas

1. GWAR (1 course or exam)

   The GWAR is the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for the CSU. This requirement may be met by 1) successful completion of an approved upper division Writing Intensive Course (WIC) which may also fill GE area distribution or major requirements OR 2) passing the Written English Proficiency Exam (WEPT).

2. American Institutions (2 courses)

   As preparation for engagement in American civic life, the CSU Board of Trustees requires students to study the historical development of American institutions and ideals, the Constitution of the United States and the operation of democratic government under that Constitution, and the processes of California state and local government. Courses certified in this area may be from upper or lower division, may be in GE, a major or minor, or may be an elective, as long as they fit the parameters outlined in the CSU guiding note: http://www.calstate.edu/app/documents/GeneralEducation/Guiding_Notes_GE_AI.pdf.

   At SSU, this requirement has historically been met through two LDGE courses, one History course in American History and one Political Science course on

American, state, and local government. Under this plan, *as an overlay courses*, other approved courses—including 4-unit major or elective courses, as well as 3-unit GE courses—could be used to satisfy the requirement. Credit by exam, including approved Advanced Placement or CLEP exams, may also be used to satisfy the requirement.

3. Critical Race Studies (1 course)

Critical Race Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that seeks to understand the ways society is culturally and institutionally constituted by race and racism in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. The Critical Race Studies overlay at Sonoma State University asks students to study the histories, lives, and experiences of marginalization/disempowerment by people of color and non-dominant identity within the U.S. and transnationally, specifically defined as African American, Latinx, Asian American/Pacific islander, Native American (the majority of course content must cover one or more of these populations). The curriculum of Critical Race Studies courses should demonstrate a teaching perspective that emphasizes a critical approach to analyses of race and racism.

4. Option A OR Option B (minimum 1 course):

Option A: Sustainability and Environmental Resilience

The need to cultivate more sustainable relationships with our environments is ever more pressing. Courses in this area provide an opportunity to teach and to learn about a wide range of topics related to past, present, and potential future modes of living as citizens of our living planet. Courses may apply a range of perspectives to questions concerning sustainability; science and technology, humanities, and social sciences all offer potential insightful modes of exploration. Classes can focus upon a range of questions focused upon sustainability and environmental resilience exemplified by but not limited to:

   a) Where do ideas about the environment come from? How have scholars and philosophers in Western traditions and beyond interpreted ethical human-environment relations?
   b) How might we measure environmental change, both in moving away from and towards greater resilience?
   c) How do various schools of thought interpret and shape more and less resilient human-environment relations?
   d) How have past and present social groups worked to develop more sustainable ways of living, and how might we apply those lessons to

improve our relationships with our environments?

e) How do expressive, textual, artistic, and cultural projects move us towards insights into our relationships with our environments?

f) How could new technologies address mitigation and or adaptation to climate change?

g) How have social movements worked to address environmental injustices?

h) What insights do less human-centered philosophies offer?

i) How do human-environment interactions both help determine and are also determined by geographic, historical, and cultural contexts?

j) What might a sustainable, ethical relationship with nonhuman environments look like?

Option B: Global Awareness

Our students leave our institution with a clear sense of the value of cultural difference and inter-cultural competence, preparing them to be agents of change and to engage socially, economically, and culturally with rapidly changing globalized communities.

Students will be offered several options to fulfill this one 3-4 unit course requirement in various disciplines. Courses in this category help students to function in an increasingly interdependent and globalizing environment and to develop an appreciation of other cultural perspectives, past or present.

a) Language Proficiency Option:
   i) Successful completion of, or credit by examination for, an intermediate level (200-499) 3-4 unit language course.
   ii) Demonstrated native or near-native proficiency in a language other than English. We recommend that appropriate departments create a shell course for this requirement, analogous to the POLS 151 credit-by-exam state and local government requirement.

b) Course Option: Successful completion of an approved 3-4 unit Global Awareness course (see definition above).

c) Study Abroad Option: Spend one academic term outside of the United States, with successful completion of at least one 3-4 unit course.

d) Academic Certificate Option: Successful completion of relevant certificate offered on campus, such as the French Competency for Wine Business Certificate or the Foreign-Language Research Certificate in History.

e) Internship or Service-Learning Option: Successful completion of an internship or service-learning experience conducted in a location

outside of the United States or with an international or transnational population. Internships must meet policies related to the number of service hours per unit (3 units = 135 hours of work)

f) An option for international students not covered by any of the above options to certify their global awareness experience.

A Thematic Approach through General Education: Sea Lanes

Introduction

A thematic approach to General Education helps to tell a meaningful story about a student's exploration of learning beyond their chosen major. Sonoma State's thematic approach to General Education (Sea Lanes) offers participating students greater coherence in their General Education studies. Students may elect to join a Sea Lane, enjoying exposure to the approaches of multiple disciplines related to a common theme or topic. Faculty and staff will work to provide advising and co-curricular support that enriches the meaningfulness of General Education. Further, within thematic areas, some sequences may be developed and offered by associated departments and faculty, providing even greater coherence and community for students wishing a "cohort" model through their studies. Although thematic approaches to upper-division courses many be designed, they will not offer enough units to count as an official theme. Sea Lanes are primarily designed for those entering Sonoma State as first-year students.

The Basics. In completing a theme, students will complete approved courses in

- A minimum of 15 units.
- Courses in at least three different distribution areas (A, B, C, D, E) of the General Education program.
- Courses chosen to help students meet multiple overlay requirements in their General Education program.
- No more than three courses in any one program or department.
- At least one Upper-Division GE course, taken as the last course in the thematic cluster, which includes coursework dedicated to reflection upon the overall General Education experience, and if possible the theme. Ideally, this and other courses in the thematic cluster would address a "wicked problem" from several disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. Reflections on theme and wicked problems should be inclusive of students who may have joined the Sea Lane later in their academic career.

Advising and Planning

- The office of Academic Programs will assist faculty in planning curriculum for Sea Lanes. Sea Lanes are meant to provide coherence, but are not meant to be blocks to graduation.
- Ideally, each Sea Lane will offer multiple courses in each GE area it covers.
- Advisors and/or peer advisors associated with the Sea Lane will need to work closely with students so they can plan the rest of their GE program in the areas not covered by the particular Sea Lane (these will vary).
- Students may leave a Sea Lane at any time and complete their GE program without ill effect. Provided they are able to complete the requirements, students may also jump into a Sea Lane even if they did not start with it as a first-year student.

- All courses approved in themes are also approved for and will count towards the 48-units required in General Education.
- Generally, larger classes will be developed early in the Sea Lane (such as First-Year Learning Communities and/or large lecture courses). As the student advances, smaller sections of related courses will be offered.
- The Office of Academic Programs will work with schools to address the best way to ensure available seats for students continuing in a Sea Lane. Not all students in a particular General Education course will be taking it as part of a Sea Lane, but seats will be reserved for those who are.
- Departments & Programs offering a course for a theme will agree to offer it at least once annually for four years

Certificates/Recognition of Completion of Sea Lane

GERS strongly considered detailing specific requirements for a certificate to be awarded to students and identified on their transcripts. We feel planning should begin without limiting creativity with prescribed ideas about certificates.

1. The primary importance of Sea Lanes is to provide integrated educational experiences. We want faculty to develop thematic approaches that will be interesting to them and to students, allowing the intellectual practices of multiple disciplines to be explored around a common theme or problem. We want that multi-disciplinary inquiry, rather than certificate requirements, to drive planning for Sea Lanes.
2. We do not want to create additional roadblocks to graduation until we see how a thematic approach works in practice. For instance: How many students will persist in a Sea Lane after the initial course(s)?
3. Some in the GERS Committee were not sure that an area of Emphasis through General Education quite rises to the level of certificate. It may be that a more apt term could be used to recognize completion.
4. As Sea Lanes are developed, the GE Sub-Committee can examine the proposals and work with Academic Programs to determine the viability of awarding certificates. Perhaps noting on transcripts that "An area of Emphasis through GE in_____') would suffice.
5. If a decision is made in to recognize Sea Lane completion on transcripts, it could still be awarded to students who began in previous years.

Community Engagement & Co-Curricular

Ideally, Community-based learning of some sort would be featured in a well-developed Sea Lane. This is something that should be addressed when certificate requirements are determined. This could be accomplished with:

- a common service experience for students across a range of courses,

- a specifically designed service-learning course as part of the thematic approaches,
- an internship experience that addresses community needs.

As each Sea Lane will be devised to have students focus on a wicked program from multiple angles, it would be valuable if the Community Engagement experiences would be aligned with the "wicked problem."

Additionally, for some Sea Lanes it might work to include semester(s) studying abroad as part of an ideal program.

For all Sea Lanes, it would be appropriate to develop events in order to foster intellectual community. Some ideas include:
- Faculty panels discussing topics across courses
- Field trips
- Student presentations of their work

Proposals
The office of Academic Programs will develop protocols for soliciting proposals. Organization meetings will be planned to match faculty from across disciplines around possible topics. Once topics have been determined, calls will go out to the faculty at large to offer (new or ongoing) courses that might fit with a theme.

One Possible Model: Cohort Approach
A cohort would be a sequenced path through a particular theme. It would be an advising path and would not confer additional recognition on transcript. It would, however, provide opportunities for students to connect and re-connect over their years of study. Even more could be done to enhance education with co-curricular events and/or residential life experiences.

- Cohort models will allow for intense curricular planning amongst groups of interested faculty should they wish to do so.
- Cohort models should be constructed so as to complete the definition of a thematic cluster (Sea Lane).
- All courses in a cohort track should be sequenced with larger classes in the beginning, and fewer or smaller classes as the students progress.
- Departments and programs must commit to offering courses in the year promised to the cohort's students.
- Students may leave a cohort and still complete a thematic cluster on their transcript.
- Seats will be held in cohort classes for cohort students, but will be made available to other students to capacity.
- Courses in a cohort model must also be approved for inclusion in the area of thematic emphasis.

- Upon proposal, cohort models will be approved by the General Education sub-committee, with support and coordination from Academic Programs. Not all areas of emphasis may include or lend themselves to cohort models. Some possible examples include:
- "The future of food" in Environmental/Sustainability"
- "Science-fiction crossings" in Identity, Diversity, and Inclusion (sample provided)
- "Labor movements past and present" in Social Justice
- "Service-learning as inquiry" in Community/Civic Engagement

First-Year Programming (Freshman Learning Communities)

First-year programming at Sonoma State University requires a common framework and clear articulation of the importance of transitional learning to each program. Current first-year courses/programs have no unifying framework, making them difficult to understand; some programs do not provide students with opportunities to complete General Education requirements; and some options do not comply with EO1100. All first-year programming at SSU have the following characteristics.

1. **Be available to all entering first-year students** (first-year programs shall not be required since some students will not be able to fit one into their schedules).
2. **Meet at least two GE Areas**.
3. **GE content is identifiable on transcripts as meeting 3 units of GE credit for each area addressed by the course.** GE instruction may be blended across the year and among courses offered in a semester, as long as each area is listed on the transcript separately.
4. **Be a year-long program.** Year-long courses should typically be taught by the same faculty with the same cohort of students.
5. **Deliver transitional content.**
   a. In each semester, students co-enroll in a 1-unit transition course.
   b. The same faculty member should ideally teach the 3-unit GE area distribution course and 1-unit transition components.
   c. FLC Faculty earn this WTU by teaching transitional curriculum in the 1-unit transition course that meets the following Learning Outcomes:

1. *Demonstrate skills necessary to be successful and actively engaged in college.*
   - *1.1 Explore different academic paths and disciplines*
   - *1.2 Identify academic passion(s)*
   - *1.3 Explore ways to pursue academic passion(s)*
   - *1.4 Practice active & self-responsible learning*
   - *1.5 Articulate the difference between high school and college*
   - *1.6 Recognize the role that resiliency and grit play in a successful college career*
2. *Demonstrate skills and dispositions to develop meaningful and healthy relationships.*
   - *2.1 Develop a respect and appreciation for different social identities*
   - *2.2 Engage intentionally and ethically in their community*
3. *Develop a sense of belonging within the campus community.*
   - *3.1 Become familiar with campus resources designed to support student success*
   - *3.2 Utilize faculty as a resource in and outside of the classroom*
   d. Include and support roles for trained Peer Mentors.