ASCC Proposal for a General Education Program: Context and Implementation Recommendations

We propose a General Education Curriculum with three parts (see Diagram). Courses in the Foundation address the breadth of modes of inquiry and fundamental skills. The Foundation courses prepare students to engage in focused coursework in specific Themes. A pair of 1-credit courses bookend the Foundations and Themes, introducing the goals of the curriculum and providing opportunities for reflection and synthesis. This General Education Curriculum is developed as a program, with specific goals and assessment at the course and program level.

The Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate vote addresses the general structure and credits within the new General Education Program. This document provides additional explanation and details for each component within the GE and identifies issues that remain to be resolved. The catalog of implementation issues identified here is likely not exhaustive: new issues will present themselves as solutions to these issues are considered.

The execution of this General Education requires financial support from the Office of Academic Affairs. Funds are needed to support the conversion of courses and to build assessment plans, to staff committees to manage course approval, and to build capacity in writing pedagogy, among other things. We affirm the assurances offered at the time of approval about the relative proportion of course enrollments in ASC for the GE and the caution to programs about avoiding “credit creep” in major programs. Adequate resources for these essential elements are considered a contingency of approval of the proposed model.

I. Rationale and Goals of General Education at Ohio State

The Ohio State University’s general education program will enable students to cultivate knowledge, skills, and attitudes that cross disciplinary boundaries and extend to areas outside specialized study programs. Reflecting the University motto, “Disciplina in civitatem” or “Education for Citizenship,” we propose an emphasis on experiences and skills that prepare students to be educated global citizens and effective stewards of their world and that leverage the academic opportunities unique to OSU.

- Administration of the GE program will continue to be led by ASCC, with oversight from OAA via the Office of Undergraduate Education (see 3335-3-30.1C and 3335-5-27, University Faculty Rules).
- The program will require assessment of both individual courses and of the program as a whole. This will be jointly managed by ASCC and OAA.
  - We recommend that outcomes from program-level assessment be shared with units so that they can understand, for example, how their students fare in the attainment of specific program goals.

Draft Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs). Note that these are modified slightly from those proposed by the GE Review Committee and require evaluation as part of the Implementation process. They will need to be mapped to the elements of the program and paired with assessments.
These program goals need to be organized within a curriculum map that links the Expected Learning Outcomes of the various elements of the program with courses and program goals. Course approval pipelines should consider ways to identify and link courses with specific goals and outcomes at the course proposal submission stage to make the curriculum map dynamic and complete.

**GOAL 1: Successful students will demonstrate certain qualities, abilities and characteristics that prepare them to be engaged citizens and leaders for life.**

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Successful students will, prior to graduation, be able to

- Locate, identify, and use information from credible sources;
- Engage in critical and logical thinking, critical analysis, and reflection;
- Devise informed and meaningful responses to problems and arguments based on the interpretation of appropriate evidence;
- Make informed aesthetic judgments;
- Formulate considered and reasoned ethical decisions;
- Compose texts for a wide range of purposes and audiences using a variety of genres and modalities;
- Speak effectively for a wide range of purposes and audiences using a variety of genres and modalities;
- Read and listen with comprehension;
- Integrate perspective from multiple sources and disciplines;
- Optimize the use of technology to create effective and efficient practices to manage various aspects of professional life;
- Transfer learning to novel situations and applications; and
- Work collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals.

**Goal 2: Successful students will engage with and apply a range of important modes of human thought and inquiry.**

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Successful students will, prior to graduation, demonstrate the ability to analyze, value, and explain

- The nature and methods of modern mathematical, scientific and social scientific knowledge;
- The development and application of a historical, artistic and literary consciousness;
- The need for integration across disparate disciplines when considering societally important topics; and
- The importance of research, inquiry, creativity, and discovery.
Goal 3: Successful students will be educated global citizens who can examine significant aspects of the human condition in local, state, national, and global settings today, in the past, and in the foreseeable future.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES: Successful students will, prior to graduation, be able to

- Demonstrate Intercultural Competence;
- Describe and analyze U.S. institutions, the cultural traditions that have formed and informed our nation and the pluralistic nature of U.S. society;
- Engage in a discussion of other nations, cultures, and issues of global interdependence;
- Explicitly examine and value various expressions and implications of diversity, both within and beyond U.S. society;
- Describe, analyze, and critique the roles and impacts of human activity on both human society and the natural world;
- Describe and apply skills needed to maintain resiliency and personal well-being in contemporary society;
- Plan for professional and career development; and
- Participate in a culture of engagement and service.

II. Bookends

In the Review Committee proposal, the General Education Seminar (the first “bookend” course) is a 3-credit, seminar-sized, faculty-taught course in which “students explore a contemporary topic, issue, idea, or problem from a multidisciplinary perspective. . . Students understand the structure and value of the general education program and recognize the attributes of an educated global citizen.”

Implementing this element of the GE as originally envisioned will be very challenging, in terms of staffing and costs (across campus, but even more so on the regional campuses). It will also be challenging to assure that these seminars do not devolve into conventional introductory courses in their disciplines, as opposed to being genuinely interdisciplinary courses that also introduce students to the philosophy and structure of the GE. Moreover, the rationale for making these 3-credit courses seems to have been largely a matter of how we count faculty workload rather than being pedagogically advisable.

We recognize the importance of having a platform through which students can be introduced to the goals and opportunities of the GE Program and through which connections can be made between student interests, previous course experiences, and long-term goals. The re-imagined GE Seminar provides that opportunity.

We recommend that the General Education Seminar be offered as a one credit, S/U, online or hybrid delivery course.

- We recommend that the GE seminar is delivered via various modes and in combination with faculty across disciplines.
• We recommend integrating digital literacy and creativity skills into the GE seminar via a direct partnership with the Digital Flagship initiative to ensure that all sections of the seminar include skill enhancing learning modules that focus on a breadth of technology related themes including; digital creation, study skills, professional communication practices, information literacy/research skills, coding basics, digital privacy and security, virtual collaboration and organizational strategies. We envision Digital Flagship partnering with faculty to develop modules that integrate content, digital literacy, and creativity activities. This integrated curriculum would be delivered via an online course within CanvasCarmen.

• We recommend that the GE seminar NOT be tracked to students’ college or intended major. These seminars should be a place for students from across the University to connect and have shared academic experiences. The GE should be providing new lenses for viewing the major, not a major-oriented lens for the other academic experiences.
  o The curriculum within the GE seminar and first-year survey courses should be mapped to ensure the courses complement each other without creating redundancy, but the specific delivery, curriculum and outcomes for each course should be separate.

• An element left out of this revised model—the faculty-taught seminar on a contemporary topic—is essentially offered already in the form of the elective first-year seminars (1-credit), which could continue to be available and promoted during orientation (as is currently the case) as an elective option.

**Draft Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes.** Note that these are modified slightly from those proposed by the GE Review Committee and require evaluation as part of the Implementation process. They will need to be mapped to the elements of the program and paired with assessments. These need to be scrutinized to make sure that they are not overly prescriptive or narrow (or that they are sufficiently granular as to permit assessment). Many of these will be met at an introductory level that is expanded upon in Foundation or Theme coursework.

**GE Seminar:** Students explore a topic, issue, idea, or problem from a multidisciplinary perspective using diverse sources and kinds of evidence, including faculty delivered content and primary sources.

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Successful students will, upon completion of the General Education Seminar, be able to

- Locate, identify and use credible sources of information to make effective arguments;
- Devise informed and meaningful responses to problems and arguments based on the interpretation of appropriate evidence;
- Engage in critical and logical thinking, critical analysis, and reflection;
- Optimize the use of technology to create effective and efficient practices to manage various aspects of professional life;
- Work collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals;
• Value the need for integration across disciplines;
• Analyze how integration of multiple disciplines enhances liberal arts education;
• Generate, deposit, and begin reflecting on artifacts from their own work in a learning portfolio;
• Explain the value of a well-rounded, global liberal arts education;
• Connect their intended general education plan to their career and life goals.

We propose that the second “bookend” envisioned in the Review Committee proposal, the **General Education Reflection**, remain essentially as proposed: a 1-credit e-portfolio reflecting a student’s General Education program and demonstrating the achievement of the GE learning outcomes. The portfolio will include artifacts from coursework taken as part of the GE and prompts aimed to elicit responses through which attainment of program goals can be assessed. This Reflection is essential to program-level assessment for the GE and for the Themes within it.

### III. Foundations

An increasing number of OSU students are entering with earned credit for much of the Foundations coursework—either through AP or IB tests or through College Credit Plus courses taken in high school. We anticipate that this trend will continue, so the Foundations will be the place where students fill in gaps to assure a broad base of introductory and foundational work across various modes of academic thinking, but fewer and fewer students will be taking all of their Foundations coursework at Ohio State. The Foundations overlap with the Ohio Transfer Module except in requiring a course in Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Diversity. The specification of ELOs for each element within the Foundation may lead to small changes in the names assigned to each element.

In terms of Expected Learning Outcomes, at a broad level, we expect that the emphasis in the Foundations will be on modes of inquiry and the practices and values of these disciplines, not specific skills or content topics. The Expected Learning Outcomes of this broad category of coursework largely speak to GE Program Goal 2, but also offer opportunities to develop the aptitudes and experiences of Goal 1. Learning outcomes for each element within the foundation remain to be articulated. The learning outcomes of related categories in the existing GE are an appropriate starting point.

Courses approved within the current GE are likely to be appropriate within the proposed Foundations. Courses with recently-revised or recently used assessment plans may be approved through an expedited process. As units resubmit their courses, it is important to ensure that the content-specific ELOs reflect changes in the K-12 curriculum and build from them rather than replicate them.

• We propose that Foundations comprise 22-25 credits, requiring a total of **6 credits** in the Arts/Humanities/History cluster rather than the current 9 credits. Students would be required to choose courses in two of the three areas. (Note: The OTM currently conflates “Arts and Humanities” into a single category and does not require either Arts or Humanities courses specifically).
• Courses in the Foundation will generally be introductory level and accessible to a broad student population but need not be at the 1000-level and may have prerequisites. This means, for example, that a course with non-English instruction that addressed Literature or Culture could be appropriate as a Foundation course in those areas, as long as it otherwise met the Learning Outcomes and had appropriate assessment and oversight.

• We propose that no department will have exclusive domain or control over any Foundation area. We expect and want inter-disciplinarity in the selection of courses within each element of the Foundation.
  o Existing expectations about concurrences within and between Colleges will remain in place.

• We propose that no currently approved GE course receive automatic approval within the Foundation. Courses that have recently undergone assessment or approval may have expedited approval, but these will still likely require modification to meet new Expected Learning Outcomes for the Foundations.

• Expected Learning Outcomes and specific learning objectives for Foundation courses will be articulated by faculty expert(s) in the discipline. Approval of Foundations courses will follow a pathway similar to that used at present for GE courses, with majority input by Arts and Sciences faculty experts within the discipline.
  o We propose that the disciplinary panels within the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee be charged with drafting ELOs for Foundations courses.
  o ELOs for Historical and Cultural Studies and for Literary, Visual & Performing Arts need to be articulated in ways that distinguish them.
    o Per the Department of History, in the context of General Education, “history” and “historical” should refer to methods, ways of thinking, and critical thinking skills in which students learn to analyze ideas, events, persons, artifacts, artistic creations, and so on within historical contexts. Among these skills are the distinction between primary and secondary sources, assessing the reliability of sources, differing modes of causation, etc.

IV. Themes

The review committee proposal introduces the principle of having students take advanced (≥2000 level) coursework that aligns with broad conceptual themes. Within the revised GE, the Themes represent a liberal arts approach to broad areas of contemporary importance and relevance that align closely, but not exclusively, with the program goals of “global citizens” and of “important modes of human thought and inquiry” and that relate to the University’s identity as a modern, Land Grant, research University. The review committee proposal requires that all students take coursework that explores ideas and practices relevant to global citizenship (“Citizenship for a diverse and just world”). The review committee proposal also stipulates that each student also take coursework within one additional theme.
The choice themes articulated in the review committee proposal are “Sustainability,” “Health & Wellness,” “Places & Spaces,” and “Transformative Ideas.” We appreciate the work that went into developing these, and recognize the strong desire from some Chairs and Faculty to have specificity in these at the time of approval so that they do not commit themselves to a proposal missing such critical detail. Thus, we propose that the first three of these (as “Sustainability,” “Health and Wellbeing” and “Lived Environments,” respectively; brief overviews below) be offered initially as the choice Themes. We also recognize that the listening sessions and Theme development process did not (and could not) include the breadth of faculty and that through the process of mapping the curriculum of the GE Program and implementing it within the College might highlight gaps and opportunities for an additional Theme. Thus, we propose a model in which there is space for the specification of a fourth additional Themes, and that these Themes be determined after broad discussion with faculty and students, in a conversation led by Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate.

Lived Environments (Previously called “Places & Spaces”)
Students understand issues related to humans and their lived environments through both objective and subjective lenses inclusive of physical, biological, cultural and aesthetic space that individuals occupy, and the relationship between humans and their natural environments.

Sustainability
Students understand how human and natural systems interact, how human well-being depends on these interactions, gain motivation to engage in potential solutions, and stewardship of resources.

Health and Wellbeing
Students understand health and wellbeing from a variety of perspectives inclusive of causes of disease, disease prevention, optimum wellness, community health, and health systems. Students can discern health systems and organizations and understand the physical, mental, cultural, social, career and financial aspects of personal health and wellbeing.

- The number of themes is flexible but sufficiently limited so that there is coherence and distinction between Themes and broad offerings within Themes.

- All choice Themes will be re-evaluated periodically and new Themes that reflect emerging issues and approaches can be proposed to replace the initial cohort. We note that the original proposal and several of the feedback documents from units contain ideas for themes, and will maintain these as starting points for discussion about the new themes. [Note: ideas that have come up include Power; Transformation; Systems]

- Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate is empowered to develop and propose a fourth additional Themes to be rolled out among the inaugural choice Themes or later. These will be managed by a Steering Committee comprised of Faculty experts in the content area covered by the Theme and should allow for interdisciplinarity and breadth of offerings.
To be included in the inaugural offering of the new GE, the fourth Theme will need to be articulated by the end of December 2019. If it is developed later, it will roll out as soon as possible.

The adoption of the fourth additional Themes will involve discussion between the Implementation Committee, ASCC and the Steering Committee of ASC faculty Senate.

We recommend that Themes be proposed and led by a team of faculty that represent at least three disciplinarily different units.

- We recommend that at their time of proposal, Themes be expected to have at least five different courses available in that thematic pathway and that the offering units provide some evidence of commitment to those courses being offered for the initial interval of that Theme.

- Although there is interest in expanding the opportunity for input into the focus of the Themes, countervailing perspectives emphasized the practical and conceptual value of Sustainability, Health and Wellbeing, and Lived Environments and the need to resolve at least some of the choice Themes to understand how the proposal might allow opportunities for programs to contribute to the Themes.

- The themes selected by the review committee leverage faculties of practice in those areas (including faculty at the regional campuses). All offer opportunities for coursework across disciplines.
  - “Lived Environments” has been substituted for “Places and Spaces” because that phrase better represented to ASCC the content of that theme.

- Implementation concerns from the regional campuses and from other groups like the Committee on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) highlighted the need to identify the Themes as soon as possible to support their planning. CESP was especially concerned about the number and timeline for development of courses in the Themes.

- We propose that regional campuses be allowed to offer a subset of the choice Themes.

- We concur with the review committee proposal that each Theme (Citizenship and the choice themes) have a faculty steering committee that helps develop Theme-specific expected learning outcomes, vets courses submitted to the theme, and mentors faculty interested in developing courses for that theme. We expect that these steering committees reflect the breadth of disciplines within that theme and that ASC faculty serve on all of these steering committees. Any Theme offered at a Regional campus should have at least one faculty member from that campus as part of its Steering Committee. The Citizenship Theme, because it is offered at all campuses and required of all students, will have the largest steering committee.

In the review committee proposal, students are expected to take 2 courses in the Citizenship theme (building from the Foundations course in Race, Gender, and Ethnic Diversity), plus 3 courses within the Theme of their choice.
• As in the review committee proposal, we propose that all students complete the “Citizenship” theme and one additional theme from a menu of approved choices.

• We propose that students have the option to satisfy a Theme (either the citizenship theme or the theme of choice), by taking either a) one high-impact 4-credit course (see details below); or b) two 3-credit courses each individually offered by a single department, but with the requirement that the two courses must be from different disciplines.
  
  o All courses within the Themes will have an assessment plan that explicitly addresses learning outcomes for that Theme and for the GE more broadly.
  
  o Each of the standard, 3-credit Theme courses must come from different departments and ideally should provide different disciplinary perspectives. Managing and navigating the interdisciplinarity of the Theme experience for student taking two standard courses requires some planning and consultation with e.g., the Registrar and academic advising staff to identify practical solutions.

  o We encourage units to consider online delivery of Themes coursework, especially for the regular, 3-credit Theme courses to support students at regional campuses in their completion of the GE.

• The high-impact practices Theme courses (especially the interdisciplinary team-taught courses) can become real showcase courses for the program: distinctive, high-impact, interdisciplinary, thus creating a real and visible identity for our GE program, centered on these themes and our delivery format. The team-taught courses would enable faculty to model interdisciplinarity rather than have students merely extrapolate interdisciplinarity by connecting the dots among their individual Theme courses.

• High-impact practices Theme courses are expected to be taught by faculty, although exceptions may be made for experienced staff with special expertise.

• Specific rubrics and guidelines will be developed for each kind of eligible High Impact Practice as part of the implementation process. In general, we recommend the following guidelines:

  o **Interdisciplinary team-taught courses** will involve faculty from different departments and different domains of expertise. Explicit comparison and integration of that expertise and perspective is expected. Implementation will require a model for credit sharing across colleges.

  o **Community-based Learning or Study Away** courses wishing to participate in the Themes will need to meet criteria for those programs and for the GE. Study Away courses offered by non-OSU entities are not eligible for inclusion within the GE unless they seek approval as GE courses.
- Research and Creative Practice courses will offer faculty-led, robust, quantitative, qualitative, or creative, arts-based research opportunities that help students achieve a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study. Students will apply scientific methods or engage in creative practices and will demonstrate the importance of inquiry, analysis, and explanation.

- World Language instruction of theme-relevant content will be considered eligible for designation as a High Impact course, although these need not apply for this distinction (=would be allowable as a regular, 3-credit course within the relevant Theme if preferred by the unit). Because culture, history, literature etc. in a foreign language is generally a 3-credit course, we recommend that Implementation explicitly address the expectations for the additional credit that would be required for these courses, should units choose to offer these as High Impact Theme courses.

- Overlap between the major program and the GE must be reduced from the 9 credits allowed in the review committee proposal because of the lighter footprint of the Themes in this ASC proposal. We propose allowing **7 credits of overlap**: this will allow students to take one regular 3-credit course and one 4-credit high impact practices course in the Themes as part of their major. More overlap than this will erode the “generality” of the GE by allowing students to take the majority of their Theme courses within their own discipline.

**Draft Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes.** Note that these are modified slightly from those proposed by the GE Review Committee and require evaluation as part of the Implementation process. They will need to be mapped to the elements of the program and paired with assessments.

**Themes:** Students undertake advanced and in-depth study of a topic or idea, bringing perspectives from multiple disciplines or modes of inquiry.

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Successful students will, upon completion of the General Education Themes, be able to:

- Engage in critical and logical thinking and critical analysis;
- Demonstrate integrative thinking across unique disciplines when considering societally important topics;
- Describe the importance of research, inquiry, creativity, discovery and the application of appropriate technologies;
- Examine and apply at least two modes of human thought and inquiry:
  - The nature and methods of modern mathematical, scientific, and/or social scientific knowledge.
  - The development and application of a historical, artistic, and/or literary consciousness.

The Themes speak to Goals 2 and 3 of the General Education program. Specific Learning outcomes for each Theme will be articulated by its steering committee, with input from ASCC.
• Expected learning outcomes for specific Themes will be developed by the Theme Steering committee. We recommend that these committees start from the ELOs articulated in the review committee proposal.

V. Embedded Skills/content

The review committee proposal mandates that students take at least one Theme course with an embedded advanced writing component and that students have within their major a data analysis course “appropriate to and required within the major.” All BS programs in ASC already have embedded data analysis courses or components to meet GE requirements.

• We concur with the review committee proposal that data analysis is most meaningfully incorporated in the major programs rather than into the GE. We are noncommittal at this point regarding requiring BA programs to embed a data analysis component in our proposed model.

  o BA programs should be surveyed to determine the prevalence and interest in Data Analysis.

We propose that writing be treated like data analysis and be incorporated within the discipline. This responds to strong feeling from faculty and students that students need opportunities to develop proficiency in writing within their discipline. Discipline-specific experience with writing has been identified as a broad need for many programs and has been identified as a desired skill by employers and postgraduate programs. Thus, we envision the advanced writing requirement be embedded within a course (or courses) within the major. We specify that these courses be developed within a framework of best practices in writing pedagogy and that faculty be trained in teaching and assessing writing, as needed.

• This proposed change will require that majors, college degree programs, or courses within them be modified to incorporate additional writing or specific practices aligned with best practices in writing pedagogy.

• To ensure that this skill is offered at an appropriate standard, we propose that any instructor teaching a GE-authorized advanced writing course in any department or unit be required to have training in writing pedagogy (through Communication, English, Center for the Study of Teaching of Writing or some other approved pathway) or co-offer this course with a unit having that expertise (Communication, English, Center for the Study of Teaching of Writing, etc).

• Programs not needing or wanting to embed an advanced writing course in their majors could direct students to advanced writing courses offered by the School of Communication or the English Department. This will likely require significant investment in staff in Communication, English and/or the Center for the Study of Teaching of Writing.
• We propose that a committee of faculty experts oversee the development, approval, and assessment of GE Advanced writing courses (as proposed above for Themes courses), including those offered by and within a major program.

VI. World Languages
The World Languages Requirement for all students in the College of Arts and Sciences is proficiency through the third level (numbered 1103) of a language other than English. This is an Arts and Sciences program requirement that supplements the General Education Program.

• World Languages courses at the level of 1103 or below should be modified to incorporate explicit assessment of Intercultural Competence in addition to the content-based goals presently in the assessment plans.

• New students (first-year students and transfer students alike) who have not taken World Languages in high school or after may choose any of the languages offered at OSU, beginning with courses numbered 1101 and completing through 1103.

• Students who have taken two or more years of a World Language in high school but do not have Advanced Placement (AP), College Credit Plus (CCP), or transfer (K) credit for such a language will be required to take a placement test during orientation to determine in which course they need to begin if they choose to take that language to fulfill the language requirement.
  
  o A student who places beyond 1103 via placement testing will have satisfied the World Languages Requirement. No credit will be awarded for “placing out” of the World Languages requirement through the OSU placement exam.
  
  o A student who has AP, CCP, or K credit for 1103 will have fulfilled the requirement.
  
  o A student who does not place beyond 1103 and does not have AP, CCP, or K credit for 1103 will be encouraged to take the language class into which they placed during their first or second semester on campus to avoid language attrition.
  
  o Students who are unable to take the recommended language course during their first year at OSU will be required to retake the placement test before beginning language coursework.
  
  o Placement for French, German, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, Swahili and Arabic is offered via computer testing and all freshman will be able to take the placement tests on their iPads.
  
  o The departments where the other languages reside do placement testing by either paper exam or interview or a combination of both. Students in the languages that do not have a computerized placement test will take the test in their department and the
department will send the test results to the registrar’s office for placement on the student’s transcript; students will be flagged for re-testing if they do not enroll in language coursework within the academic year.

- Heritage learners are encouraged to take a placement test in their heritage language and in any language studied in high school so that they can choose which language they wish to pursue to satisfy their World Languages Requirement.

- Native speakers, defined as students who have completed high school in a language other than English, are exempted from the World Languages Requirement.

- Students in “tagged degrees” in the arts (Bachelor of Art Education, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Music Education, Bachelor of Science in Design) that do not have a World Languages requirement under the current General Education Requirements are exempted but strongly encouraged to adopt this requirement.

- We recommend that assessment and management of the World Languages Requirement remain with the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee.