

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Item Name: Request to Establish New General Education Program for Arizona State University

Action Item

Requested Action: Arizona State University asks the board to approve its proposed General Education Program.

Discussion

Arizona State University seeks to implement a new general education program effective for new admitted students in fall 2024.

The new and revised General Education curriculum proposed here has been designed by faculty and staff across Arizona State University in a process that has drawn from the results from the current general education pilot program at ASU, the general education programs of peer institutions, and evidence-based best practices in teaching and learning.

Following adoption of ABOR policy 2-210 in February 2021, ASU constructed an ad hoc committee charged with assessing the current pilot program and developing a framework consistent with the new ABOR policy. The committee consisted of faculty from all ASU colleges that teach undergraduates, academic advisors, assessment experts, and other stakeholders. It met biweekly from May to November 2021 to review the current pilot, evaluate the structures of existing general education programs at peer institutions, survey relevant literature, and propose a structure for ASU to use for its revised general education program. An update regarding that work was provided in the ABOR Academic Affairs committee meeting of November 2021.

In 2022, all ASU faculty were invited to participate in workshops to design the required learning outcomes for the proposed general education program before you today. More than 2,300 learning outcomes were generated by more than 400 faculty members. In parallel, steering committees for the program have been established to move forward from design to implementation.

While drawing inspiration from ASU's charter and design aspirations to create a program that is uniquely representative of ASU, the proposed general education program simultaneously fulfills all aspects of ABOR's policy 2-210, as evidenced in Appendix C. The program is structured by three pillars: knowledge, competencies, and assessment. The required exposure to seven knowledge areas ensures students gain

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the fundamental knowledge necessary to engage problems and think across broad disciplinary contexts. In parallel, and in concert with the academic majors, the curriculum fosters six cross-cutting competencies designed to ensure students excel in the workplace and have the tools to continue learning lifelong. Finally, the entire curriculum is defined by student learning outcomes to facilitate continuous assessment and improvement.

ASU is currently working on implementation plans for the revised program. Considering the size and scope of the proposed revisions, implementation will be staged over three academic years. Faculty review of existing and proposed courses under the new criteria for inclusion in the proposed general education program will begin in fall 2022, and courses designed for the new requirements will begin to be offered in spring 2023. Degree program curricula will be formally modified to include new requirements and courses in AY 23-24. Then, starting in AY 24-25, students will enter the university under the new requirements. Students who entered the university prior to AY 24-25 will complete their degrees under the existing requirements at ASU.

Committee Review and Recommendation

The Academic Affairs and Educational Attainment Committee reviewed this item at its March 24, 2022 meeting and recommended forwarding the item to the full board for approval.

Statutory/Policy Requirements

ABOR Policy 2-210, "General Education"

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Request to Establish New General Education Program

University: Arizona State University

Name of Proposed Academic Program: Arizona State University General Education Program
Academic Department: Office of the University Provost
Geographic Site: All current and future sites at which ASU offers academic programs
Instructional Modality: All available modalities
Total Credit Hours: 35 credits
Proposed Inception Term: Fall 2024
Brief Program Description: <i>Purpose:</i> The goal of ASU's proposed General Education program is to train students, regardless of major, to step out of their disciplines, to think like mathematicians, think like writers, think like scientists, and think like historians. Thinking from someone else's perspective requires thoughtful inquiry and the ability to recognize and interpret evidence to drive informed solutions. It requires the ability to work effectively and efficiently with people from across disciplines, across cultures, and across political boundaries. It requires the ability to think creatively, pushing beyond traditional, narrow constraints. And it requires the ability to employ inquiry, creativity and collaboration so as to meaningfully engage with existing societal institutions to affect change. <i>Structure of Proposed Program:</i> This proposed general education program presented here draws inspiration from ASU's charter (https://newamericanuniversity.asu.edu/about/asu-charter-mission-and-goals) and

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design aspirations (<https://newamericanuniversity.asu.edu/about/design-aspirations>) to create a program that is uniquely representative of ASU. The program is structured by three pillars: knowledge, competencies, and assessment.

In addition to completing university requirements in first-year composition [3 credits] and mathematics [3 credits], students must complete courses in each of seven key knowledge areas: Arts and Humanities [6 credits]; Global Communities, Societies and Individuals [3 credits]; Governance and Civic Engagement [3 credits]; American Institutions [3 credits]; Global Sustainability [3 credits]; Scientific Thinking [8 credits]; and Quantitative Reasoning [3 credits]. Additional details regarding knowledge areas can be found in Appendix A.

In parallel, students will complete courses fostering the following six cross-cutting competencies: Critical Thinking and Inquiry; Communication and Civil Discourse; Leadership, Collaboration and Teamwork; Civic and Global Responsibility; Creativity and Innovation; and Self-Reflection and Lifelong Learning. Students will develop these competencies both in courses specifically designated as part of the general education curriculum and courses in their major field of study. This will facilitate building long-lasting competencies that traverse disciplinary lines and serve as foundations for lifelong personal and career success. Additional details regarding required competencies can be found in Appendix B.

Finally, continuous assessment to drive curricular innovation underpins the entire system. Each knowledge area or competency is defined in terms of assessable student learning outcomes, enabling assessment at multiple levels including learning outcomes, courses, and degree programs.

Arizona State University General Education Program



ABOR Policy 2-210 Comparison:

A comparison of ASU’s requirements to ABOR Policy 2-210 is found in Appendix C.

ASU’s General Education Program Process of Development:

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This revised General Education curriculum has been designed by faculty and staff across Arizona State University in a process that has considered results from the current general education pilot program at ASU, the general education programs of peer institutions, and evidence-based best practices in teaching and learning.

In fall 2020, ASU launched a pilot program at the West Campus entitled “Transformations”. In parallel, ABOR Policy 2-210 was adopted and then revised in February 2021. ASU’s proposal today was developed by a 26-member, ad hoc committee created in March 2021 consisting of faculty from each of the colleges that teach undergraduates and staff from academic advising, assessment, and curriculum development. The committee evaluated the current pilot program and recommended this structural framework for general education at ASU consistent with ABOR 2-210, contemporary scholarship, and reflective of ASU’s mission and design aspirations. Following an update presentation of this framework to ABOR in November 2021, ASU undertook a series of workshops open to *all faculty* to develop the learning objectives for the proposed curriculum.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Plan:

Regular and rigorous assessment is essential to continuous improvement of this program to meet student needs and achieve desired learning outcomes. Implementation work is underway to develop the necessary support structures for assessment at scale in parallel with curriculum development.

To facilitate assessment and structure the proposed program around measurable outcomes, each component of this proposed program is defined in terms of learning outcomes. Learning Outcomes for each Knowledge Area are found in Appendix A and descriptions of each competency are found in Appendix B.

With the support of ABOR, all three of Arizona’s public universities are currently completing assessment of writing across a broad range of disciplines at both entry and exit points in students’ academic careers. At ASU, the current project serves as a pilot for determining infrastructure and resources necessary for assessment of such cross-cutting competencies across the university and the general education curriculum. Analogous tri-university assessments are planned for Quantitative Reasoning (AY 22-23) and Critical Thinking (23-24). The results of these assessments are being used to plan the assessment needs for the new general education curriculum, which will launch the following year.

To implement this general education program, faculty steering committees have been established for each required component. These committees are charged with designing discipline-agnostic assessment instruments. For inclusion in the proposed general education program, courses will be required to include instruction to meet the required learning outcomes and assignments that can be used for external assessment of these learning outcomes with university-level instruments. Similarly, exit assessment points for each competency will be identified in each degree program.

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Projected Enrollment for the First Three Years:	
<p>ASU is planning a phased implementation approach in which courses meeting the new requirements will begin to be offered in spring 2023, and first-year students will enter under the new requirements in AY 24-25. Students entering ASU before fall 2024 will continue in the currently existing program.</p> <p>The following estimates assume that 100% of freshmen in each academic year enter under the new requirements, 64% of transfer students each year will be lower division and require some general education courses in the proposed system, and transfer students who require general education courses will complete them within their first year at ASU. Estimates include all ASU locations and modalities.</p> <p>AY 2024-2025: ~46,654 AY 2025-2026: ~74,076 AY 2025-2026: ~79,212</p> <p>This is a rapid timeline for deployment of changes of this scale and breadth, and all facets of the program will be staged during implementation to meet this challenge.</p>	
Evidence of Market Demand:	
<p>ASU's general education program has incorporated competencies valued by students and employers as documented by professional organizations including the American Association of Colleges and Universities and EMSI.</p>	
Similar Programs Offered at Arizona Public Universities:	
<p>Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona will both also require general education programs aligned with ABOR policy 2-210.</p>	
Objection(s) Raised by Another Arizona Public University?	NO
New Resources Required? (i.e. faculty and administrative positions; infrastructure, etc.):	
<p>Implementation planning suggests new faculty hires may be required. The phased implementation approach facilitates effective planning of resources to meet student needs in growing areas.</p>	
Plan to Request Program Fee/Differentiated Tuition?	NO
Specialized Accreditation?	NO

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Appendix A: Knowledge Area Requirements

First-year Composition [3-6 credits]:

The first-year composition course teaches students to discover, organize and develop ideas in relation to the writer's purpose, subject and audience. It emphasizes modes of written discourse and effective use of rhetorical principles, developing the writing skills necessary for success in the university and beyond. It is an essential, university-wide introduction to the Communication and Civil Discourse competency.

Mathematics [3 credits]:

The first-year mathematics course develops mathematical reasoning skills appropriate to the student's major. It serves as a foundation to continue study in the Quantitative Reasoning knowledge area.

Arts and Humanities [6 credits]:

Students will complete 6 credits of study in Arts and Humanities in which they will develop the ability to:

1. Interpret or critically analyze cultural, political, or social practices, texts, or other cultural creations across temporal or spatial dimensions.
2. Recognize perspectives and values of people living in a different time or place as manifest through cultural creations.
3. Apply ethical thinking and the creative process to define or address contemporary challenges.

Global Communities, Societies and Individuals [3 credits]

Students will complete 3 credits of study in Global Communities, Societies and Individuals in which they will develop the ability to:

1. Analyze ongoing and emerging global issues.
2. Analyze impacts of policies across scales from individual to societal levels.
3. Recognize unequal experiences in relation to race, gender, social class, citizenship or other dimensions of difference.

Governance and Civic Engagement [3 credits]

Students will complete 3 credits of study in Governance and Civic Engagement in which they will develop the ability to:

1. Evaluate the roles of governmental institutions and actions in shaping civic participation and community outcomes.
2. Engage in informed, bi- or multi-lateral, civil public discourse around controversial issues.

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American Institutions [3 credits]

Students will complete 3 credits of study of American Institutions that will include at minimum:

1. how the history of the United States continues to shape the present;
2. the basic principles of American constitutional democracy and how they are applied under a republican form of government;
3. the United States Constitution and major American constitutional debates and developments;
4. the essential founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of American Institutions of self-governance;
5. landmark Supreme Court cases that have shaped law and society;
6. the civic actions necessary for effective citizenship and civic participation in a self-governing society – for example civil dialog and civil disagreement; and
7. basic economic knowledge to critically assess public policy options and to inform professional and personal decisions.

Global Sustainability [3 credits]

Students will complete 3 credits of study of Global Sustainability in which they will develop the ability to:

1. Explain sustainability challenges using systems thinking in a variety of contexts that may include social, political or environmental.
2. Explore plausible futures arising from current scenarios or assumptions as a means of making decisions.
3. Identify ethical and global implications of choices and policies designed to address sustainability.

Scientific Thinking [8 credits]

Students will complete 8 credits of Scientific Thinking coursework in which they will develop the ability to:

1. Obtain and interpret scientific data.
2. Develop and test scientific hypotheses.
3. Assess the validity of scientific claims.
4. Create models to explain observable phenomena and understand physical, biological or social processes in the natural world.

Quantitative Reasoning [3 credits]

Students will complete 3 credits of Quantitative Reasoning in which they will develop the ability to:

1. Build a mathematical or statistical model to describe and solve a problem in a novel context.
2. Make decisions informed by quantitative data and models.
3. Communicate quantitative ideas.

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Appendix B: Competency Descriptions

Critical Thinking and Inquiry

ASU graduates create knowledge by transcending academic disciplines.

Communication and Civil Discourse

ASU graduates engage in social, political, and economic life by effectively and respectfully communicating their own perspectives and engaging with those of diverse others.

Leadership, Collaboration and Teamwork

ASU graduates enable the success of self and others.

Civic and Global Responsibility

ASU graduates engage people, issues, and communities through mutually beneficial partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally.

Creativity and Innovation

ASU graduates embrace creativity and responsible innovation with purpose and impact.

Self-reflection and Lifelong Learning

ASU graduates will proactively develop oneself and one's career and life paths through continual personal and professional learning, curiosity, and awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses.

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Appendix C: Comparison of ASU’s Proposed Requirements to ABOR Policy 2-210

ABOR Knowledge Area	ASU Proposed General Studies Program
Literature, Fine Arts, Humanities	Arts and Humanities [6] Global Communities, Societies and Individuals [3]; Global Sustainability [3]
Composition, Communication and Rhetoric	First-year composition [3-6]; Upper division literacy [3]; Communication and Civil Discourse Competency
American Institutions	American Institutions [3]; Governance and Civic Engagement [3]; Arts and Humanities [3]
Social and Behavioral Sciences	Global Communities, Societies and Individuals [3]; Governance and Civic Engagement [3]; Global Sustainability [3]
Natural Sciences	Scientific Thinking [8]; Global Sustainability [3]
Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning	University Mathematics Requirement [3]; Quantitative Reasoning [3]; Scientific Thinking [8]

ABOR Skill	ASU Proposed General Studies Program
Written and Oral Communication	Communication and Civil Discourse Competency; First-year composition; Upper division literacy
Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking and Inquiry Competency
Teamwork	Leadership, Collaboration and Teamwork Competency
Intercultural Competency	Global Communities, Societies and Individuals; American Institutions; Communication and Civil Discourse Competency
Time Management	ASU 101: First Year Success Course

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Civic engagement and civil discourse grounded in fundamental civic knowledge	Communication and Civil Discourse Competency; Civic and Global Responsibility Competency; Governance and Civic Engagement; American Institutions
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