



To: University General Education Council
From: Greg Straughn, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Date: March 7, 2016
Re: Distinction between General Education and University Requirements

Context

This proposal seeks to provide clarity between the terms “General Education” and “University Requirement for Graduation.” Currently, the menu of courses on pages 38-39 of the Catalog refer to a set of “University Requirements for All Bachelor’s Degrees” totaling 56 hours. These include Bible, Science, Communication, Math, English, Social Science, etc. Most of these courses are lower-level, free of pre-requisites, and provide a broad introduction to the field of study.

The General Education Review that took place last year, culminating in a vote this past September, had as one of its main goals to create more flexibility for students in moving through their programs. The proposal helps to more fully realize that goal.

Definition

SACSCOC provides the following expectations of Core Requirement 2.7.3 (General Education). General Education should: (1) be a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensure breadth of knowledge, and (3) be based on a coherent rationale. For baccalaureate degrees, SACSCOC defines this to be at least 30 semester hours drawn from the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics.

For the purposes of clarity, ACU distinguishes the difference between General Education and University Requirement as follows:

General Education: Courses that normally have lower-level numbering, are free of prerequisite and co-requisites, appeal to more than one or two majors, and do not “narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession” (SACSCOC 2.7.3).

University Requirement: Courses or experiences that satisfy the University Requirement for all Bachelor’s Degrees whether “General Education” or major/discipline-specific. Some of the courses may be upper level, require pre-requisites, or be focused on a single major.

The following courses or menus of courses compose the 38 hours of General Education Requirements for the University:

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| • CORE: Cornerstone (3 hours) | • Science Menu (6 hours) |
| • BIBLE: 101, 102, 211 (9 hours) | • Mathematics (3 hours) |
| • English: 111, 112, Soph Lit (9 hours) | • Social Science (3 hours) |
| • Communication: 211 (3 hours) | • Kinesiology (2 hours) |

The following courses or menus of courses compose the 18 hours of University Requirements:

- Bible: Upper-level selections (6 hours)
- Cultural Awareness (3 hours)
- Historical Literacy (3 hours)
- Selection (3 hours)
- Free Elective (3 hours)

Additionally, each student is required to complete a Writing Intensive course as designated by their major and to complete a Capstone course or experience as specified by their degree.

Rationale

This clarification provides several important benefits:

- It makes the courses and menus of courses designated as “general education” internally consistent and consistent with the SACSCOC definition of general education as they are populated by broad, lower-level, and pre-requisite-free courses.
- It eliminates the need for exceptions to accommodate upper-level majors classes in the Historical Literacy or Cultural Awareness menus. Courses that populate those menus must still meet the criteria that define those menus.
- It provides a more coherent rationale for the structure of requirements for all bachelor’s degrees than is currently in place.

Catalog Changes

Two changes to the catalog will need to be implemented:

- The *Definition* section above would need to be included at an appropriate location (perhaps in proximity to the table that outlines the University Requirements for all Bachelor’s Degrees).
- The term “General Education Selection” would need to be replaced with “University Requirement Selection” (p. 38).

The following diagram provides a heuristic for the distinction of terms.

