

General Education Revision Proposal

May 6, 2021

General Education Proposal Team

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Dear Colleagues,

Early in the Fall of 2020, the Provost assembled a faculty team to review ACU's General Education and University Requirements, evaluate them against the recently revised student learning outcomes, consider their alignment with faculty and student expectations, and revise them for improvement. We were to take into account the SACS guidelines for general education, the Texas General Education Core Curriculum, and several peer and aspirational universities' general education curricula as we proceeded.

After several listening sessions with faculty and advisors, as well as robust student feedback, our team set about our task of analysis and articulation of a revised curriculum and its supporting documents. We produced two whitepapers of context—one on the direction of higher education in the United States, and one on trends of transferability. We then elaborated the newly revised student learning outcomes and weighed our present curriculum against those metrics to expose its strengths and weaknesses. The result of our efforts is a proposed new General Education Curriculum, for both BA and AA degrees, that reflects the six-month process described above. The first draft was taken to faculty and academic advisors for initial feedback, and the revised final proposal is presented herein.

A summary of the net changes reflected in the new proposal are as follows:

1. Combined "General Education" and "University Requirements" into one slate.
2. Removed PEAC requirements.
3. Removed 3 hours of electives.
4. Replaced "Historical Literacies" menu with "History and Political Science" menu.
5. Changed "Cultural Awareness" to "Cultural Literacies" menu with a more defined focus.
6. Revised and clarified the language in each menu, adding warrants to guide future councils as they populate new and revised courses.

This proposed curriculum is to be disseminated in May of 2021 for consideration of university academic committees (UGEC, UUAC) and a faculty vote in the Fall.

Cole Bennett, on behalf of the committee:

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General Education Proposal Team Charge

October 2020

General education requirements form the cornerstone of an undergraduate degree. Rather than a list of requirements, the general education plan should ensure that students meet the university student learning outcomes and have an organizing principle. It should represent a breadth of knowledge that is not customized to a student's major. The purpose and value should be clear for students of all ages and backgrounds.

The General Education Proposal Team begins its work in the 11th year of our current University Requirements in the year that new [undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes](#) have been adopted. The enduring [mission](#) of the university and values expressed in the [strategic plan](#) provide strong institutional identity. The work of the team will be to consider the students that the institution serves and the knowledge and context they need in order to be college-educated adults who lead and serve in all aspects of life in a world beyond 2020.

ACU has taken a thoughtful approach to general education in the last two decades. The charge to the General Education Proposal Team is to evaluate the landscape — both of the institution and higher education — explain what ACU students in this decade need, and propose a curriculum that provides breadth of knowledge and serves the university's current student learning outcomes.

The work will begin the week of November 2, and the team will work until the submission of the final curriculum proposal on April 16. The chair will lead the presentation and discussion of the proposal at faculty meetings and academic councils as the proposal is considered into the 2021-22 academic year and may call on team members to participate in these events.

The team will develop recommendations for general education requirements to present to campus. These requirements will:

1. Provide the common academic experience that all ACU students share, regardless of degree, major, or modality.
2. Serve the undergraduate student learning outcomes of the institution. The outcomes were defined by a faculty team in 2019-20 and are not up for revision in the team's work. The team should demonstrate connections to the outcomes.
3. Lean on ACU's strengths, using existing courses when appropriate and outlining new courses where necessary. The introduction of any new classes should come with a clear charge for our institutional disciplinary experts who will develop the classes.
4. Have a clear rationale that can be used to explain the value of the requirements to students, faculty, potential students, and parents.
5. Use a mix of required courses and menus; all menus should be clearly described and have a clear charge for our institutional disciplinary experts who will develop the criteria for the menus and their assessments.

6. Comply with SACSCOC standards for general education requirements.
7. Recognize the landscape of higher education, taking into account cost to students, transferability, and feasibility of delivery.
8. Include an appropriate set of requirements to serve the associate's degree.
9. Be developed in consultation with student, faculty, and administrative focus groups.

The team will deliver the following:

1. Summary of student and faculty listening sessions (Dec. 1). The listening sessions should ask what's working and what's not in our current plan and focus on student experience and overall faculty assessment (listening both to faculty in disciplines that deliver general education and those that do not).
2. Written evaluation of current University Requirements against the current student learning outcomes and university mission (Dec. 23).
3. Written evaluation of necessary domains to include in general education requirements with a survey of the landscape in this area (Jan. 29). This should include the direction of higher education, transferability, financial realities, and benchmarking other institutions' requirements.
4. Review domains report with the associate provost for curriculum and assessment for input and discussion of feasibility (by Feb. 5).
5. Explication of student learning outcomes (Feb. 26).
6. Draft of curriculum and report demonstrating the connection between the proposal, institutional identity, and student learning outcomes (Feb. 26).
7. Review curriculum proposal and report with the associate provost for curriculum and assessment for input (by March 5).
8. Summary of student and faculty listening sessions (April 2). The listening sessions should focus on reactions to the curriculum proposal.
9. Final general education curriculum proposal (April 16).

Summary of Round 1: Faculty Listening Sessions

Several listening sessions were conducted during the week of Nov. 16-20, including a special session for the UGEC members. Three prompting questions were presented, and responses, plus a further category of “other themes” are synthesized below:

Common Themes: What do you like about current GenEd/Univ. requirements?

- That there is a bit of everything/lots of options
- Appropriate breadth for a liberal arts university
- Quality of GenEd faculty
- Cornerstone--it's a really good course. It's beneficial and responds to, “Why Gen Ed?” With a diverse “core” it provides a shared first-year experience, despite transfer issues. This course is beneficial to aid students in developing critical thinking skills early in their academic career.
- Bible Curriculum - 15 hours is an appropriate amount (maybe a bit more structure in the second half)
- General set up - Math, Science, Historical literacy, Coms 211

Common Themes: What do you **not** like about current GenEd/Univ. requirements?

- **Menus** (especially Cultural Awareness) need more focus and definition.
- Too much, too rigid; needs more ability for students to choose.
- Adjectives like “Freshman” and “Sophomore” need to be replaced with “First-year” and “Second-year” (etc.) to align with what other universities are doing as well as course numbering systems.
- Writing sequence: too easily transferred in, not producing outcomes we want.
- Two physical education classes are unnecessary. Where does kinesiology fit in the new standards? (We need some.)
- With the historical literacy category, it is strange that people without history backgrounds can teach history but historians cannot teach other fields (e.g., the history of liberation theology for Bible credit).
- Needs more critical thinking/philosophy/critical literacy - Like Core 210 and Bcor were supposed to do
- Too many 300-400 level courses in GenEd menus
- Ethics is missing

Common Themes: What solutions might you offer?

- Use a “buckets” approach as is suggested in the PACE project. Students would choose from a “being human” or “creation” or “diversity” bucket.
- Consider bringing back CORE 210. It would enhance diversity, international students' needs, etc. We need philosophy which is what core 210 was.

- Consider Civilization I and II with interlaced humanities (art, music, history, literature).
- Civic responsibility is needed given our climate--history, humanities, etc. We may meet it but would love to have it stated in our outcomes.
- Our former quantitative literacy outcome was desirable.
- We need information and quantitative literacy because we can create projects about those.
- We need to articulate the purpose of the general education for students.
- Technical writing tied to fields/ departments
- Bible course tied to major/ department/ field
- Math across the curriculum

Other Common Themes

- **Too much Bible** (especially for professional degree programs); faith-based learning comes from interactions with faculty in their majors and the way they are treated in classes
- We want students to see how the courses fit with clear outcomes
- Need to talk to stakeholders before making big changes (UGEC, Coms 211, Cornerstone, etc.)
- **Skepticism:** Consistency in benchmarking (academic quality for one list; salaries another list; tuition)--not always being honest. Clarify the rationale for a review, state perceived problems, and answer questions (e.g., "Do all courses and syllabi need to go back through UGEC and UUAC?"). Continue building a culture of trust through clear rationale and transparent processes. Consider revising the future approval process for gen ed outcomes to include more faculty visibility and voice. It would be helpful to get all the divisions (academics, athletics, admissions, and administration) of the campus together in one place and talk to each other. We need **context** to make good decisions about our gen ed curriculum--what conversations are they having--is all this really about money or recruiting etc. Ensure transparency in the work of the General Education Review Committee.

Student Survey Results

The survey presented to students asked them to rate various GenEd/UR courses, as well as leave open comments regarding their opinions of these requirements. Notable findings are listed below:

Courses with relatively high percentage of “Very High” or “High” value to respondents:

Core 100/115
Bib 101
Bib 102
Bib 211
Sophomore Literature
Social Science Class
Upper-level Bible
Cultural Awareness Class

Courses with relatively high percentage of “Very Low” or “Low” value to respondents:

Comm 211
Science Class
Math 120 <
PEAC
Historical Literacy Class
Writing Intensive Class

Open-Ended Comments

Students’ open-ended comments covered much ground, as you might imagine. A few things are very clear from this data, however (to this writer):

1. Students despise Comm 211.
2. Many students really liked their required Bible classes.
3. Most students see zero value in PEAC courses; many are offended at their lack of depth.
4. Cornerstone has very mixed reviews.
5. Students like and see the need for classes on cultural diversity.
6. Many students don’t see the value of taking classes “outside their major.”
7. In general, students would prefer more variety/choice.

Student Opinions of ACU's General Education

A group of faculty members has been commissioned to review and revise ACU's general education and university requirements, which are the required classes outside your major designed to provide breadth of knowledge to all graduates (Core, Bible, English, communication, science, math, social science, kinesiology, historical literacy, and cultural awareness). Each university takes a slightly different approach to these general education requirements, and we would like to hear your thoughts as we set about the process of evaluating our own. Your opinions matter a great deal to us.

1. What is your classification?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior
- ☐ Graduate Student
- ☐ Other

2. Which campus do you attend?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Abilene (main)
- ☐ Dallas (online)

3. What is your major?

4. Please rate the value of each course to your overall education:

Mark only one oval per row.

	Haven't yet taken	Very low value	Low value	Moderate value	High value	Very high value
CORE 110 or CORE 115	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ENGL 111	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ENGL 112	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
BIBL 101	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
BIBL 102	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
BIBL 211	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sophomore literature (200-level English)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
COMM 211	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Science classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social Science classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MATH 120 or higher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PEAC (PE activities)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Upper-level Bible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Historical Literacy class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural Awareness class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Writing Intensive class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Capstone class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Tell us about classes or class menus you ESPECIALLY liked OR disliked in ACU's General Education.

6. What else would you like to say about ACU's General Education curriculum?

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Google Forms

CLASS

	Frequency	Percent
Freshman	125	24.6%
Sophomore	124	24.4%
Junior	121	23.8%
Senior	137	27.0%
Else	1	0.2%

CAMPUS

	Frequency	Percent
Abilene	494	97.2%
Dallas	14	2.8%

COLLEGE

	Frequency	Percent
CAS	227	44.9%
CBS	45	8.9%
COBA	88	17.4%
CEHS	85	16.8%
NURS	45	8.9%
CGPS	14	2.8%
Else	2	0.4%

COURSES ("Haven't taken" is excluded)

	Frequency	Average
CORE	483	2.93
ENGL 111	346	2.97
ENGL 112	334	2.95
BIBL 101	494	3.49
BIBL 102	377	3.45
BIBL 211	349	3.44
ENGL 200	323	2.95
COMM 211	286	2.48
SCIENCE	399	2.95
SOC SCI	357	3.11
MATH 120	396	2.84
PEAC	316	2.5
UL BIBL	301	3.33
HIST LIT	280	2.6
CULT AWAR	321	3.47
WIC	241	2.95
CAPSTONE	198	3.15

Evaluation of Current General Education Menu

Narrative Report:

The GenEd Committee spent time discussing, creating, drafting, and revising the elaborations of the four new SLOs; these elaborations follow on the next page. We feel that the three to four statements of what ACU graduating students “will do” represent an active posture toward attitudes and behaviors that our General Education and University Outcomes should yield. We understand that these elaborative statements are subject to revision until the end of February, after feedback from administration and faculty are given.

We then devised a table to represent how well our current GenEd/Univ Outcome **menus** (with their respective courses) fit the SLOs as newly written and elaborated. We lettered each outcome (A-D), then matched them with each applicable menu element, along with a number (1-5) corresponding to our opinion of “fit” (5 is best). Thus, for example, we feel the “Core” menu element of our GenEd curriculum fits the “Communicate Clearly” SLO at the level of a “2” (somewhat weakly) while the “English” menu fits the “Communicate Clearly” SLO at a “5” (very well), and so forth. We sought to defer any judgments based on the individual courses’ executions under the menus as we evaluated them. For instance, the overall dissatisfaction of our current COMS 211 course, as noted by student and faculty feedback, did not factor into how we feel the SLOs fit the Communication *menu* as such.

Too, we chose to not evaluate the menu headings of “electives,” though we realize that merely offering electives has some level of value.

How well does the menu fit the SLOs?

ACU Menu Components (catalog)	Applicable SLOs (fit) [5 is best]
The Core (3 hours)	A (2); B (3); C (3)
Bible (9 hours lower, 6 upper)	A (4); B (4); C (3); D (5);
English (6 hours)	A (5); C (5)
Humanities (3 hours)	B (4); C (3)
Communication (3 hours)	A (5); C (5)
Science (6 hours)	C (5);
Mathematics (3 hours)	C (5);
Social Science (3 hours)	A (3); B (4); C (3)
Kinesiology (2 hours)	C (2)
Historical Literacy (3 hours)	B (3)
Cultural Awareness (3 hours)	B (5)
University Reqt Elective (3 hours)	N/A
Free Elective (3 hours)	N/A

Outcomes:

A-Communicate Clearly: Students will

1. Compose effective audience-appropriate oral, written, and multimedia discourse;
2. Listen to, understand, and critically evaluate rhetorical claims;
3. Present ideas to diverse audiences via varied modalities.

B-Examine Diverse Perspectives: Students will

1. Demonstrate competent discourse on global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations;
2. Understand the interconnectedness of the human experience with a posture of humility while celebrating difference;
3. Interrogate their internal and external views and values for greater self-awareness.

C-Gather and Use Information to Address Problems: Students will

1. Evaluate widely disparate sources of information and competing evidence to form their own reasoned positions;
2. Analyze quantitative data, published writing, or observable phenomena to draw informed conclusions;
3. Interpret mathematical and/or logical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematics, and draw inferences from them;
4. Integrate new data to existing knowledge and practice.

D-Engage Christian Approaches to Community and the Bible: Students will

1. Engage the Bible as Scripture in responsible, life-giving ways;
2. Synthesize multiple strategies to express and exercise personal faith;
3. Respond to ecclesial and social communities in a respectful, ethical, and faith-informed manner.

Evaluation of SLOs' fit with University Mission as stated in catalog:

to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world:

A-Communicate Clearly:

The committee believes this SLO fits ACU's mission statement at the level of a 4. Serving and leading others takes communication skills at many levels and at many points along the way. Although one may serve in relative silence, thoughtful and intentional service and leadership usually requires exchanges of written and oral communication, as well as presentations to groups with clarity and precision.

B-Examine Diverse Perspectives: (Stephanie to draft)

The committee believes this SLO fits ACU's mission statement at the level of a 5. Service and leadership throughout the world requires a desire for knowledge about and understanding of the world in which we live, and the populations with whom we interact. The values, skills, and knowledge related to diversity allow ACU graduates to effectively serve and lead with confidence and compassion.

C-Gather and Use Information to Address Problems:

The committee believes this SLO fits ACU's mission statement at the level of a 5. One cannot serve or lead well without relevant information. A leader needs to understand the complexities of a situation in order to help create the best path for those she or he is leading. Moreover, service requires careful understanding of what those being served need. The ability to thoughtfully gather, assimilate, analyze, and use data is essential to ACU's graduates as they fulfill our mission.

D-Engage Christian Approaches to Community and the Bible: (Rodney to draft)

The committee believes this SLO fits ACU's mission statement at the level of a 4-5. Engaging Christian approaches that center around the Bible, theological inquiry, and spiritually formative practices equips students to serve and lead in their local communities, both secular and ecclesial. Students receive these experiences from taking both their Bible classes and courses in their discipline alongside practicing Christians.

General Education Contexts in the United States

General Education Proposal Committee

General education is undergoing a reformation period characterized in part by the challenging environment in higher education (McMurtrie, 2019), increased dialogue around the nation's civic health (Mulrooney & McKinney, 2019), and the availability of data from employers who desire certain skills and abilities in the workplace (AAC&U, 2018). This white paper will identify themes and trends in higher education and also situate ACU within the national context. Because ideas about general education are ubiquitous, a definition and a brief explanation of how various stakeholders view general education are provided. Additionally, some of the challenges of transforming general education from stakeholders' perspectives are addressed. Next, a brief discussion on the skills employers desire is included. Finally, a summary of how general education should be updated for a 21st century university environment is presented.

General education defined

The transformation in general education called for by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (Gaston, 2015) invites university stakeholders to consider general education in context. The AAC&U defines general education as:

That part of a liberal education curriculum that is shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing essential intellectual, civic, and practical capacities. General education can take many forms, and increasingly includes introductory, advanced, and integrative forms of learning. (Gaston, para. 9)

The context of contemporary general education is situated in what Bok (2013) describes as the century-old objectives of general education: to equip students with skills and knowledge for a career, prepare them for citizenship in a democracy, and assist them in leading a full and satisfying life (p. 167). For the past 40 years, the philosophy of general education at ACU has been consistent with the trends in contemporary higher education. The approach has been to provide students with

“menus” that enable them to achieve the breadth of a liberal arts curriculum (Smith, 2018, p. 3).

These menus help students achieve outcomes that Humphreys (2006) says should include

“knowledge of human cultures and the natural and physical world; intellectual and practice skills; individual and social responsibility; and integrative learning” (as cited in Schejbal, 2017, p. 218).

General education is often viewed differently by various stakeholders. Administrators may see it as a critical part of a traditional liberal arts curriculum model which includes major courses, electives, and general education. Faculty have historically accepted this “tripartite division” of the curriculum (Bok, 2013, p. 170) even as they retain ownership of the curriculum and revision process, while students and advisors frequently view courses in general education as something to “get out of the way” (Gaston, 2015, p. v; Thompson, Eodice, & Tran, 2015). Additionally, some students do not fully understand the overarching philosophy of a liberal arts curriculum and find the general education courses disconnected from their major courses or view them as a “means to an end” (Schejbal, 2017, p. 217).

Despite the disparate views from among these stakeholders, employers, administrators, and faculty agree that the benefits of a well-planned liberal arts curriculum are recognized as graduates apply the breadth and depth of their knowledge in the way they think, act, and engage (Schejbal, 2017, p. 218). Students may take a bit longer to recognize the benefits of their academic experience. Gaston (2015) suggests that universities should aspire to transform graduates’ perceptions of their liberal arts degree from that of a mere credential to something having “inherent value [in its] applicability” (p. 9.) Additionally, Gaston asserts graduates should feel empowered by the “demonstrated proficiencies that degrees signify” (p. 9). Students who are not socialized to the importance of an organized, coherent general education plan may still reap some benefits but what may be lost as they traverse their freshman and sophomore years without a full understanding of the architecture and purpose of the curriculum?

Employer feedback

Universities should involve internal and external stakeholders in a large-scale revision to the general education curriculum. In a 2018 survey, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) sought information from executives and hiring managers about “the degree to which [they] believe that a college education is important...the learning outcomes they believe are most important...in today’s economy and how prepared recent college graduates are in these areas” (p. 2). The data indicate the primary skills most valued by executives and hiring managers include “oral communication, critical thinking, ethical judgment, working effectively in teams, working independently, self-motivation, written communication, and real-world application of skills and knowledge” (AAC&U, 2018, p. 12). These skills map directly to the aspirations of the 21st-century vision for the University in which ACU graduates will think globally, critically, and missionally while thoughtfully engaging important issues (ACU, 2010).

Even as respondents indicated the most valued primary and secondary skills (e.g., locating, organizing, and evaluating information from multiple sources, analyzing complex problems, working with people from different backgrounds, being innovative and creative, staying current on changing technologies), they perceive “a gap of at least 40 points in importance versus preparedness in recent graduates’ critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills, ability to apply knowledge and skills to the real world, oral communication skills, and self-motivation” (AAC&U, 2018, p. 13). This discrepancy indicates universities need to be more intentional and systematic about assessing student learning and measuring the extent to which students are meeting outcomes. Schejbal (2017) describes one approach to this assessment as “practical humanism” (p. 225). That is, he advocates for a dialectical approach that does not separate the cognitive process of learning from the attainment of skills needed in everyday life. He refers to these as “skills of a thoughtful life” (p. 225).

Faculty role

The ideals of shared governance in a university setting support that faculty retain ownership of the curriculum. However, historically there has been some dissonance between faculty support of a general education curriculum and a desire to teach courses within their specialty and discipline. Additionally, a wide swath of university faculty are often called on to provide instruction in general education in the absence of a unifying framework that organizes efforts to meet outcomes. Ratcliff and Johnson (2004) explain:

General education frequently is governed by a revolving cadre of faculty drawn from the various disciplines contributing courses to its requirements. The faculty committee that oversees the general education curriculum, if the institution has one, tends to draw those interested in internal institutional service and those committed to preserving the resources accruing to their department from the general education program. An associate provost, dean, or director frequently administers a program taught by borrowed faculty who seldom, if ever, convene to discuss the aims, organization, and outcomes of general education” (p. 2, as cited in Schejbal, 2017, p. 221).

While faculty want to maintain ownership of general education and thus reify its importance, Reardon et. al., (1990) found that faculty participation may contribute to students’ low view of general education. Reardon et. al., write faculty “acknowledge that when teaching general education classes their ‘ambivalence towards general education may communicate mixed messages to students’ (p. 7, as cited in Thompson, Eodice, & Tran, 2015, p. 290). Simply stated, faculty ambivalence signals to students that general education courses are not important. That ambivalence may be linked to ill-defined curriculum design or a stronger emphasis on research than teaching.

Despite some ambivalence, evidence suggests faculty strongly support goals related to general education. In a recent survey, 99.5 percent of university faculty rated the ability to think

critically as either essential or very important. Over 90 percent of the respondents also believe it is critical or very important that students know how to write effectively. Finally, almost 96 percent rate the ability to evaluate the quality and reliability of information as essential or very important (Hurtado, Eagan, Pryor, Whang, & Tran, 2012, as cited in Schejbel, 2017, p. 221).

The literature indicates that a university's general education is a reflection and expression of the faculty. It is viewed as their best effort at what students should know in order to enter the world and workplace. Thus, a conversation about general education reform between administration and faculty can be difficult. In their review of Wheaton College's general education reform, Miglio and Wilhoit (2019) suggest that to avoid polarization and territorialism, a true spirit of collaboration must exist. In their account of Wheaton's process, the authors suggest a critical step in the success of their curriculum reform was to identify the stakeholders and involve them in the process. When stakeholders have a clear sense of the purpose of general education, a shared sense of ownership emerges that impacts student learning and outcomes in an isomorphic fashion (AAC&U, 2020).

The student voice

One of the bigger challenges facing any general education reform is listening to the voices of the different stakeholders and incorporating their thoughts and insights into the changes that need to happen. One particular voice that tends to be overlooked in the general education reform process is that of the students themselves (Thompson, Eodice, and Tran, 2015, pp. 280-281). Since students are the ones taking and, in many cases, paying for these courses, any reform of general education needs to take their voice into account. In many instances, students are unaware of why they need to take these courses or the rationale behind the menus and choices they have placed in front of them. Many operate under the assumption that they simply "have to get them out of the way" before getting into the more important class in their major. It is imperative, then, that faculty "articulate

clearly the purpose and value” of the courses that are found in the general education curriculum (Thompson, Eodice, & Tran, 2015, p. 280).

Though many students “generally endorsed the idea that the purpose of general education courses is to produce well-rounded students and responsible citizens (Thompson, Eodice, & Tran, 2015, p. 289), many consider it a waste of their time. When asked to rank the most and least important outcomes of their college experience, students tended to rank as least important the outcomes most often associated with the general education experience (Thompson, Eodice, and Tran, 2015, p. 289). For students, expanded knowledge of foreign cultures, American History and culture, and science and its relation to other fields was not considered all that important for general education (Humphreys & Davenport, 2005). In contrast, when asked what learning objectives they hoped to achieve after four years of college, students “placed the greatest priority on gaining a sense of maturity, time-management skills, strong work habits, self-discipline, and teamwork skills” (Humphreys & Davenport, 2005).

Advisors

The role of the advisor is very important not only when it comes to helping students navigate the general education requirements, but also in understanding why these courses are important. Advising is also critical because, “students rarely, if ever, look for classes that complement one another—they select classes that have space, fit their schedules, and are popular.” (Most & Wellmon, 2015, p. 111). In one recent survey of students, nearly 40% said that neither an advisor nor an instructor had ever clearly explained the general education curriculum to them. Another 25% of the students in the same survey said they could neither disagree or agree with this statement. (Thompson, Eodice, & Tran, 2015, p. 285)

Advisors can play a pivotal role in the students experience and appreciation of the general education experiences. Egan notes:

Yet there has been little examination of the ways in which advising contributes to students' understanding of the merits of general education, as well as how advisers can encourage students to hone their abilities to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills they are gaining from courses taken through general education. Specifically, academic advisers have the potential to help facilitate what might be referred to as the three *I*'s of general education—that is, those aspects of learning often associated with improving the quality and impact of general education programs for undergraduate students: interdisciplinarity, integration, and intentionality. (2015, p. 76)

Above all, advisors should refrain from reinforcing the notion that students need to get their general education requirements out of the way so they can focus on the more important task of completing their major. Rather, “the adviser must help the student understand how the pieces of the curriculum fit together—why courses are taken in a particular sequence, how they build upon one another, and the ways in which knowledge across courses can be synthesized and used to inform future coursework” (Egan, 2015, p. 82). For any reform to be successful, all the stakeholders on the academic team (e.g., faculty, students, staff, advisors) need to be on the same page. A curriculum “needs to be a collaborative, shared enterprise undertaken and led, above all, by faculty members dedicated to fostering its broader ends and collectively planning, teaching, and revising its basic elements, from particular courses and labs to broader requirements and literacies. And it must be accompanied by excellent advising” (Most & Wellmon, 2015, p. 107).

General education as practical and ideal

The general education curriculum should be aspirational in nature at the same time serving as a foundation for the acquisition and application of knowledge. McMurtrie (2018) argues the curriculum must offer preparation that allows students to “think broadly and deeply hone their communication skills, and address the tough and timeless questions embedded in every discipline” (McMurtrie, p. 4). This preparation will enable students to acquire knowledge, synthesize it, and

apply it “in the context of progressively more challenging problems” (AAC&U, 2020, p. 9). This application should happen across the curriculum, including in majors courses and electives.

With optimal execution, students will have a deep knowledge of the importance of general education requirements within a liberal arts education. In recent years, it has become increasingly important that students be able to approach the world with an appreciation for what the arts and humanities can offer. “A liberal education is [one that] frees the mind to seek...the truth unencumbered by dogma, ideology, or preconceived notions. [This] person can think for himself or herself, is both broad- and open-minded, and is...less susceptible to manipulation or prejudice” (AAC&U, 2020, p. 7). A liberal arts education provides an opportunity not just for success in a chosen vocation; it also provides students an opportunity to make meaning of the world, engage as a thoughtful member of a democracy, and contribute to the greater well-being of the community.

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Transfer Considerations and Credit Mobility in Higher Education

General Education Proposal Committee

Credit mobility, or the movement of academic credits from one institution to another, may not seem like a central concern within general education; yet, it is. Credit mobility envelops academics because it requires assessing the equivalence of learning objectives, course content, and mastery. Additionally, mobility impacts outcomes that are important to students and institutions, such as institutional choice, graduation rates, and financial debt.¹ As universities promote learning and graduation and compete for students, credit mobility becomes a significant concern.

Many ACU students transfer academic credits to ACU from advanced placement (AP), CLEP exams, and/or other higher education institutions (HEIs), and some students transfer out of ACU as well. We have a responsibility to ensure both learning and achievement, keep debt as low as possible, and support students on their educational journey. Because most credit transfers occur with lower-division (100- and 200-level) general education courses, credit mobility is an important consideration in general education.

In the following sections, we summarize pertinent national/state and campus considerations surrounding credit mobility and we offer recommendations regarding ACU's curriculum, policies, and procedures relevant to the transfer of general education credits. As we considered these issues, three ethical warrants guided our thinking:

- Unless necessary for learning, we should keep credit mobility barriers as low as possible for residential and online students.

¹ Boatman, A., Hurwitz, M., Lee, J., & Smith, J. (2020). The impact of prior learning assessments on college completion and financial outcomes. *Journal of Human Resources*, 55, 1161-1193. <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.55.4.1117-9167r2>; Smith, J., Hurwitz, M., & Avery, C. (2017). Giving college credit where it is due: Advanced placement exam scores and college outcomes. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 35, 67-147.

- The faculty, supported by their academic departments and committees, have the privilege and the responsibility to uphold academic integrity in core curriculum requirements and transfer policies.
- Transfer policies and procedures should be current and efficient, enabling the work of admissions and advising professionals.

National and State Considerations

Motivated by issues such as affordability, convenience, and fit, a large percentage of U.S. students migrate credits from one issuer to another. One third of U.S. higher education students are enrolled in two-year institutions, and many of these intend to transfer to a four-year school.² Even if they don't enroll full-time in a community college, three quarters of students receiving bachelor's degrees in Texas take at least one course at a Texas community college.³ Despite this fluidity of credits, a sizable number experience credit loss when they attempt to transfer.

In a study of 13,000 students migrating from community colleges to four-year institutions, Monaghan and Attewell found that 28% of students lost 10% to 89% of their credits when transferring, and 14% essentially started over because the receiving institution accepted fewer than 10% of their credits.⁴ In 2011, for a bachelor's degree that required 120 credits, U.S. students, on average, took 136.5 credits. In Texas public universities and colleges, students took an average of 149 credits to complete a 120 credit degree. These figures indicate that some number of credits is being lost due to remediation, lack of alignment, or other considerations.⁵

² National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *Profile of undergraduate students: 2011-12*. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015167.pdf>.

³ Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2014). *Improving transfer to increase student success*. <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/DocID/pdf/6073.pdf>.

⁴ Monaghan, D. B., & Attewell, P. (2015). The community college route to the bachelor's degree. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 37, 70-91; Giana, M. S. (2019). The correlates of credit loss: How demographics, pre-transfer academics, and institutions relate to the loss of credits for vertical transfer students," *Research in Higher Education*, 60, 1113-1141. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-019-09548-w>.

⁵ College Completion America (2011). Time is the enemy. http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time_Is_the_Enemy_Summary.pdf.

Statistics like these are of concern to public higher education coordinating boards who supervise financial and educational outcomes within states.

Texas General Education Core Curriculum

As a state with a large number of college students (1.47 million) enrolled in a complex network of public institutions,⁶ the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (hereafter, Coordinating Board) took on the task of lowering transfer barriers and mandated a Texas General Education Core Curriculum (Texas Core). By fall 2014, they required that Texas public HEIs adopt a core curriculum with no fewer than 42 semester-credit hours (SCHs) that covered the eight component areas shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Texas General Education Core Curriculum⁷

Transcript Code	Component Area	Required SCHs
010	Communication	6 SCH
020	Mathematics	3 SCH
030	Life and Physical Science	6 SCH
040	Language, Philosophy and Culture	3 SCH
050	Creative Arts	3 SCH
060	American History	6 SCH
070	Government/Political Science	6 SCH
080	Social and Behavioral Sciences	3 SCH
090	Component Area Option	6 SCH

⁶ National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest for Education Statistics*.
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_304.15.asp?current=yes.

⁷ Texas General Education Core Curriculum. <http://board.theccb.state.tx.us/apps/TCC/>.

Although some content guidelines were specified, public institutions were granted the latitude to select courses satisfying each component area. The number of SCHs for each component area was specified by the Coordinating Board. A “component area option” provided flexibility for each institution to add six hours beyond the set requirements within the eight component areas. Learning objectives for each component area were specified by the Coordinating Board in an effort to confirm that courses at various HEIs achieved similar outcomes. A transcript code system used by all public institutions allowed easy identification of core curriculum courses. No waivers or substitutions were allowed to satisfy Texas Core requirements within Texas public HEIs.

To facilitate credit mobility, if a student completed the Texas Core at a sending institution, he or she was designated as “core complete,” certifying that the student fulfilled the general education requirements at the receiving institution even if that school used different courses to satisfy the component areas.⁸ If a student was not designated as core complete by the sending institution, courses would be assessed on an individual basis and many still transfer with no credit loss because of the shared state-wide approach to general education.⁹

These efforts by the Coordinating Board brought Texas public institutions into greater alignment in general education learning objectives and requirements. They massively simplified the complex maze of bilateral articulation agreements and ensured near 100% credit mobility of general education courses among public institutions. They allowed flexibility to designate courses within each component area but, as a potential downside, they limited public HEIs from developing distinctive general education curricula.

⁸ The Coordinating Board included a provision for HEIs, whom they approved to require more than 42 hours, to require core complete transfer students to take additional coursework. See the Texas Education Code 61.822(c), <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.61.htm#61.821>.

⁹ In creating a Common Core, the Coordinating Board affirmed learning *and* credit mobility goals: “The purpose of the core curriculum is to ensure that Texas undergraduate students enrolled in public institutions of higher education will develop the essential knowledge and skills they need in order to be successful in college, in a career, in their communities, and in life. The core curriculum facilitates the transfer of lower-division course credit among public colleges, universities, and health-related institutions throughout the state.” See the Texas General Education Core Curriculum, <http://board.theccb.state.tx.us/apps/TCC/>.

Advanced Placement, CLEP Credit, and Dual Credit

The issue of transferring courses is not restricted to students who end their post-secondary career at a different HEI from where they began. Many students who begin and end their studies at the same institution transfer in credit. In the California State University (CSU) system, 70% of graduates who began at CSU as freshmen earned some credits from outside the CSU system, including advanced placement (AP), CLEP, dual credit, and courses taken at other HEIs.¹⁰ One study of University of Alabama and Auburn University student transcripts during the 2015-16 academic year found that most students (70%) transferred in credits from another grantor. Between 30% and 40% of those transferred credits were from AP tests.¹¹

All three methods of receiving college credit from knowledge gained in high school--dual credit, AP, and CLEP--serve as predictors of future success in college. Successful CLEP performance increases the probability of graduation by 5.5%.¹² Similarly, students who receive college credit from at least one AP exam are 1% to 2% more likely to graduate within four years with a bachelor's degree than students who took an AP exam and did not receive credit; and the impact is cumulative. The more AP credits a student receives, the more likely he or she is to complete a degree in four years.¹³ Students who receive credit for dual enrollment are also more likely to persist in postsecondary education. In a study in Florida, three years post-high school, students who received credit for dual enrollment had a significantly higher GPA and earned 15.1 credits more than their non-dual enrollment peers.¹⁴ These findings suggest that some transfer

¹⁰ Bell, A. & Valliani, N. (2014) The real cost of college: Time and credits to degree at California State University. http://realcostofcollegeinca.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Real-Cost-of-College_Full-Report_CSU.pdf.

¹¹ Katsinas, S., Bray, N., Hagedorn, L., Dotherow, S., & Malley, M. (2019). From vertical to dynamic transfer: Recognizing continuous swirl in American higher education. *Change*, 51(3), 44–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2019.1606607>.

¹² Boatman, A., Hurwitz, M., Lee, J., & Smith, J. (2020). The impact of prior learning assessments on college completion and financial outcomes. *Journal of Human Resources*, 55, 1161-1193. <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.55.4.1117-9167r2>.

¹³ Smith, J., Hurwitz, M., & Avery, C. (2017). Giving college credit where it is due: Advanced placement exam scores and college outcomes. *Journal of Labor Economics* 35, 67–147.

¹⁴ Karp, M. M., Calcagno, J.C., Hughes, K. L., Jeong, D. W., & Bailey T. R. (2007). The postsecondary achievement of participants in dual enrollment: An analysis of student outcomes in two

credits tend to predict academic success. When these credits transfer, they enable quicker movement toward graduation with less cost.

As mentioned earlier, credit mobility may ease the recruiting of first-time freshmen. Of students who took the six highest volume AP exams (i.e., Biology, Calculus, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, US Government and Politics, and US History), 94% attended a college that gave credits for the exams. Of those, 58% enrolled in an HEI that required a score of 3 on the exams, 38% enrolled in an institution requiring a 4, and 4% enrolled in an HEI that required a score of 5.¹⁵

ACU Considerations

To provide additional context regarding ACU, over the past five years, ACU students have transferred in 174,214 courses (not credit hours). Of these courses transferred in, 117,197 (67%) had the potential to count towards ACU's 2020-2021 general education requirements; 32,360 (19%) courses did not transfer in as any specific ACU course. Others that transferred in may or may not have counted toward the student's degree. During the same period, ACU students have brought in 37,665 courses through credit by exam (AP, CLEP, and International Baccalaureate (IB) program credits). Of these courses, 35,925 (95%) had the potential to count toward ACU's 2020-21 general education requirements. However, many of our menus limit credits to particular exams making some credits transfer in as electives rather than satisfying general education requirements.

Transferability

Private HEIs in Texas are not bound by the Coordinating Board requirements, but the Texas General Education Core Curriculum influences credit mobility into private institutions in important ways: it simplifies the variety of general education schemes in the state and

states. Report, National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/dual-enrollment-student-outcomes.pdf>

¹⁵ Smith, J., Hurwitz, M., & Avery, C. (2017). Giving college credit where it is due: Advanced placement exam scores and college outcomes. *Journal of Labor Economics* 35, 67–147. A variety of explanations exist for these allocations, including that relatively few institutions require a score of 5. Nevertheless, credit mobility is one factor influencing enrollment decisions.

standardizes their learning objectives and numbering protocol. It also creates a potential attraction of mobile “core complete” status.

Transfer dynamics among public and private HEIs differ somewhat, however. Generally, private HEIs receive a much smaller number of transfer students from community colleges compared with flagship public institutions. Students transferring into four-year private colleges or universities generally come from other four-year institutions.¹⁶ The total number of students identified as “transfer students” at ACU is relatively low--only 3.5%.¹⁷ However, as stated, many ACU-Abilene students transfer in credits from AP, CLEP, IB, and/or other HEIs to satisfy their general education requirements. With an overall graduation rate of 61%, a sizable number of students are transferring out of ACU before graduation, encountering credit mobility issues at their receiving institution.¹⁸ Although clearly we do not control the general education curricula of other institutions, we can impact time to graduation and cost for transfer-out students by our curricular requirements.

A large percentage of the students enrolling in undergraduate programs offered by ACU-Dallas are transferring in credits from other institutions, most of which are located in Texas. For this reason, it was compelling for ACU to adopt a modified “core complete” transfer policy. Under the university’s [Texas Core Complete](#) policy, ACU recognizes core complete students as having satisfied ACU’s general education requirements with the exception that they must also satisfy a nine- or 12-hour Bible requirement and sophomore literature.¹⁹ For all

¹⁶ Jabbar and Edwards report that most community college students in Texas transfer to public institutions: See Jabbar, H. & Edwards, W. (2020). Choosing transfer institutions: Examining the decisions of Texas community college students transferring to four-year institutions, *Education Economics*, 28, 156-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2019.1690636>. Among U.S. private institutions, three in four transfer students come from four-year institutions. See EAB (2019), The state of transfer at flagship and more selective institutions: EAB transfer benchmarking survey results. Washington, DC, EAB, p. 7.

¹⁷ According to the National Center for College Statistics, ACU-Abilene had 123 transfer students out of a total of 3,525 undergraduate students in fall 2019. See College Navigator. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=abilene+christian&s=all&id=222178#enrolmt>.

¹⁸ National Center for College Statistics, “College Navigator.” <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=abilene+christian&s=all&id=222178#enrolmt>.

¹⁹ As of spring 2021, the policy in effect is: “If you transfer with 24–59 credit hours, the regularly required BIBL 101 and 102 courses will be combined into one course, BIBL 103. Additionally, if you transfer 60 or more credit hours, you will be exempt from taking an advanced BIBL course.”

transfer students, the institution continues to examine credits individually and apply them to appropriate ACU general education requirements.

Some private HEIs in Texas have moved toward the Texas General Education Core Curriculum; others have not. Beyond adopting a Texas Core Complete policy, the ACU faculty have not had an opportunity until now to compare our general education requirements to the Texas General Education Core Curriculum. It is now possible for ACU to simultaneously leverage its freedom in designing a general education curriculum that is ideal for our students, uphold academic standards through equivalencies and performance, and enhance credit mobility.

Recommendations

In light of the national/state and ACU credit mobility considerations, we offer six recommendations, accompanied by a brief rationale:

1. *Uphold academic integrity and quality when setting transfer policies and procedures.*
 - Effective transfer policies and practices consider the integrity of individual courses and the curriculum as a whole. It is possible to emphasize both academic integrity and lower transfer obstacles.
2. *To be transfer friendly for incoming and outgoing residential and online students, design general education to maximize alignment with the Texas General Education Core Curriculum.*
 - Many students do not originally intend to transfer from one institution to another. Even for those who do, they often do not enroll in courses with their destination institution in mind. In Texas, at least, this tends to lead to credits being lost in transfer.²⁰ Evaluating our curriculum with the Texas Core in mind would decrease credit losses and minimize credit additions. Acceptance of this

²⁰ Hodara, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., Stevens, D., & Mazzeo, C. (2017). Exploring credit mobility and major-specific pathways: A policy analysis and student perspective on community college to university transfer, *Community College Review*, 45, 331-349.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0091552117724197>.

classification allowed ACU to expand its mission and open doors of educational access to a wider swath of the potential student population.

3. *Adopt a modified core complete policy for residential transfer students.*

- Acceptance of this classification allows ACU to expand its mission and lower transfer barriers to residential students who are transferring in from Texas public two-year and four-year HEIs.

4. *To enhance transfer friendliness, publish the mapping of course equivalences for our most frequent transfer-in institutions so students and parents can assess general education transfer credits.*

- Students consider institutional support and perceived quality when making decisions to transfer. Enabling and publicizing transfer equivalencies provides information and may increase attractiveness to transfer.²¹

5. *Review processes for keeping equivalence mapping current.*

- In a recent survey of HEIs, 48% of respondents indicated that articulation agreements don't optimize transfer credit for students, 44% said their agreements were out of date, and 20% said that students retake courses unnecessarily.²² Accessible course equivalence mapping would lessen these mistakes.²³

6. *The appropriate body (preferably, the UGEC) should review ACU's transfer rules and consider eliminating all rules that raise barriers to credit mobility without enhancing academic quality.*²⁴

²¹Jabbar, H. & Edwards, W. (2020). Choosing transfer institutions: Examining the decisions of Texas community college students transferring to four-year institutions, *Education Economics*, 28, 156-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2019.1690636>.

²² EAB (2019), The state of transfer at flagship and more selective institutions: EAB transfer benchmarking survey results. Washington, DC, EAB, p. 23.

²³ For an example of mapping, see SMU's *Transfer Equivalency Guides*. <https://sites.smu.edu/des/registrar/TransferEquivalency/>.

²⁴ Transfer rules are located under the "Transferring Credit" section of the ACU catalog: <https://catalog.acu.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=327>.

- *To ensure faculty oversight of academic integrity, we affirm rule 7: “Evaluation of transfer work intended to meet specific ACU degree requirements is the responsibility of the chair of the department offering the comparable course at ACU.”*
- The 2020-21 ACU Catalog specifies 15 transfer rules. The benefit of some of these appear to have been lost in time. Some complicate transferability with minimal or no benefit to academic integrity or credit mobility. *We recommend that the appropriate authorities consult with stakeholders and review all transfer rules, revising as needed.*

Summary of Proposal Revisions Following Feedback

When the initial draft of the General Education Proposal was completed, our committee conducted several different feedback sessions--six faculty listening meetings, a UGEC meeting, an academic advisors meeting, a deans meeting, and various *ad hoc* discussions with colleagues and administrators. We had several bits of feedback, most of which grouped together generally around 1) favorable comments toward replacing the *Historical Literacies* menu with *History and Political Science*, removal of the PEAC requirements, and the keeping of a robust Bible requirement; and, 2) concerns over the choice given to opt out of a literature requirement, overly restrictive language in the *Life and Physical Science* and *Cultural Diversity* menus, and the vagaries in the public speaking requirement.

As a result of reviewing all these conversations, our committee revised the proposal to include a *Humanities* menu that focuses on literature alone rather than a *Literature and Fine Arts* menu. We also removed certain strictures from the *Life and Physical Science* menu and revised the language on several menus to sharpen their underlying logic. Finally, we linked the newest expression of our student learning outcomes (SLOs), which were approved in the Spring of 2021, to each menu.

It is important to note that this General Education proposal is an articulation of menus, proportional hours and SLOs attached to each, and explanations (or “warrants”) that the university would use to fill them. The committee listed courses we feel are natural and exemplary examples for each menu. Faculty in the disciplines represented in each menu will collaborate to establish criteria and assessment measures for each menu in order to allow us to consider the same curriculum approval process that we have used for more than a decade. Faculty may apply to put any course on a menu through the curriculum approval process, and the committee particularly urges the faculty responsible for any courses listed to apply for addition to the menus. Approving this curriculum proposal does not populate the menus with the courses listed; the menus will be blank at approval. Approving the curriculum framework proposed here creates the space for departments to apply to have their courses fulfill the menus.

As we go forward, the team strongly recommends clear adherence to new menu criteria to keep the lists of available courses focused and strongly recommends that any course serve no more than one menu.

Explication of ACU Student Learning Outcomes

A. Communicate Clearly: Students will

1. Compose effective audience-appropriate oral, written, and multimedia discourse;
2. Listen to, understand, and critically evaluate rhetorical claims;
3. Present ideas to diverse audiences via varied modalities.

Creating and evaluating discourse--spoken, written, and multimodal--are crucial necessities for navigating one's world. In workplaces, churches, civic gatherings, and social circles, one's ability to communicate effectively to multiple audiences should be expertly honed and frequently practiced as it contributes to the effectiveness and success of all endeavors.

ACU offers university students ample opportunities to write in myriad genres, compose and deliver oral presentations with various technologies, and master all forms of rhetoric. Within this general education domain, students will analyze sophisticated texts for persuasive strategies, logical warrants, sound evidence, and ethical integrity. They will also produce both oral and written discourse in an array of formats, including essays, speeches, and digital compositions.

B. Examine Diverse Perspectives: Students will

1. Demonstrate competent discourse in global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations;
2. Understand the interconnectedness of the human experience with a posture of humility while celebrating difference;
3. Interrogate one's internal and external views and values for greater self-awareness.

The ability to engage in competent discourse, understand interconnectedness of diverse peoples, and interrogate one's own internal processes is challenging, courageous work; it is essential to ACU's mission of service and leadership domestically and globally.

Knowledge of diversity and equity is an excellent partner to the many activities on campus that expose one to difference. These courses address not only the beauty of difference, but history and current relevance of diverse voices, thought, and experiences. Within this general education category, students might encounter diversity particularly in social sciences, art, humanities, and Biblical studies.

C. Gather and Use Information to Address Problems: Students will

1. Evaluate widely disparate sources of information and competing evidence to form their own reasoned positions;
2. Analyze quantitative data, published writing, or observable phenomena to draw informed conclusions;
3. Interpret mathematical and/or logical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
4. Integrate new data to existing knowledge and practice.

Examining, creating, and sharing knowledge forms the very heart of higher education. The world provides neverending streams of discovery through various fields of study, but responsible learners will carefully assess and expertly handle the offerings of the agora. Applying these critical skills to all genres of knowledge positions graduates to innovate and contribute to a better society.

Although the evaluation, analysis, interpretation, and integration of knowledge is specific to fields of study, students must be provided with a foundational understanding of unique epistemologies. Diverse courses in the sciences, mathematics, and the language arts, together with the on- and off-campus research opportunities often accompanying them, such as the annual Undergraduate Research Festival, provide students with these encounters.

D. Engage Christian Approaches to Community and the Bible: Students will

1. Engage the Bible as Scripture in responsible, life-giving ways;
2. Synthesize multiple strategies to express and exercise personal faith;
3. Respond to community issues in a respectful, ethical, and faith-informed manner.

As a faith-based institution, ACU holds the Bible as a foundation of spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is a lifelong practice that includes Bible knowledge, faith practices, and community engagement, as one navigates the world in which one lives, serves, and leads. We seek to lay a moral and ethical foundation to govern problem-solving and decision-making in all areas of our students' lives.

Within this general education domain, students will encounter Christian and spiritual education from various perspectives as they work through sacred religious texts and the centuries of scholars who have written about them. As students progress to graduation, each year provides a spiritual focus that is accompanied by relevant offerings in Bible, theology, ethics, ministry, and missions.

General Education Curriculum: Bachelor's Degrees

Final Draft

From *The ACU General Education Proposal Team*:

C. Bennett, R. Ashlock, S. Salkil, S. Hamm, A. Sutherlin, M. Lynn

- **Cornerstone** (3)
 - **Bible and Theology** (15)
 - **Communication** (9)
 - Writing** (6)
 - Oral Communication** (3)
 - **Math** (3)
 - **History and Political Science** (6)
 - History** (3-6)
 - Political Science** (0-3)
 - **Humanities** (3)
 - Literature** (3)
 - **Cultural Literacy** (3)
 - **Life and Physical Sciences** (6)
 - **Social and Behavioral Sciences** (3)
 - **General Education Elective** (3)
- Total hours 54**

Menu: Cornerstone (3 hrs)

Detail: *Cornerstone (3)*

Menu: Bible and Theology (15 hrs)

Detail: *Bible (15)*

Courses within this domain will help students develop skills pertaining to reading and interpreting the Bible as well as integrating the expression and practice of personal faith in various spheres of life. [A:2, C:2, D:1, D:2, D:3]

Courses satisfying this menu are as follows:

- 9 hours: BIBL 101; 102; and 211; and
- 6 hours: BIBH, BIBL, BIBM, BIBP, BIBT, BMIS, BGRK, BHEB (300-499)

15 hours total

All new students must enroll in BIBL 101 in their first semester. Transfer students with 24 or more hours accepted for credit must enroll in BIBL 103 in their first semester.

Courses satisfying the Bible and Theology requirement for students with **24-59 hours** credited to ACU are:

- 6 hours: BIBL 103 and 211; and
- 6 hours: BIBH, BIBL, BIBM, BIBP, BIBT, BMIS, BGRK, BHEB (300-499)

12 hours total

Courses satisfying the Bible and Theology requirement for students with **60 or more hours** credited to ACU are:

- 6 hours: BIBL 103 and 211; and
- 3 hours: BIBH, BIBL, BIBM, BIBP, BIBT, BMIS, BGRK, BHEB (300-499)

9 hours total

Menu: Communication (9 hrs)

Detail: *Writing (6) and Oral Communication (3)*

Courses within this domain will help students develop skills to critically evaluate rhetorical claims as well as compose and present effective, audience-appropriate written and oral discourse. [A:1, A:2, A:3]

Courses satisfying this menu are as follows:

- ENGL 111 (3)

Or

- ENGL 106 (2)
- ENGL 006 (1)
- *And*
- ENGL 107 (2)
- ENGL 007 (1);

And

- ENGL 112 (3)

And

- A 100- or 200-level introductory public speaking course with COMM prefix (3).
[**note:** COMM 120 is a new course being proposed to meet this requirement; the course proposal is recommended by the committee for consideration]

Menu: *Mathematics (3 hrs)*

Detail: *Mathematics (3)*

Courses within this domain will equip students with mathematical reasoning, mathematical communication, and mathematical problem-solving necessary for effective quantitative and analytical reasoning in their professional and personal lives.
[C:2, C:3, C:4]

Courses satisfying this menu are as follows:

- MATH 120-199, 238
- **or** MATW 120-199

Menu: *History and Political Science (6 hrs)*

Detail: *History (3-6) and Political Science (0-3)*

Courses within this domain will help students learn about ideas, actors, places, movements, and events influencing human history and governance.
[B:1, B:2, C:1, C:2]

Courses satisfying this menu are as follows:

- HIST 100-299 (3-6)
- POLS 225 (0-3)

Menu: *Humanities (3 hrs)*

Detail: *Literature (3)*

Courses within this domain will expose students to literature from various time periods and geographical concentrations, with emphases on its aesthetics, relevance, and importance toward understanding the human condition. [A:2, B:2, B:3, C:2]

Courses satisfying this menu are as follows:

- Literature (3)
 - ENGL 200-299
 - **or** Foreign Language Literature

Menu: *Cultural Literacy (3 hrs)*

Detail: *Cultural Literacy (3)*

Courses within this domain provide students opportunity to develop informed discourse and understand the interconnectedness of diverse peoples. Additionally, students will courageously interrogate their own internal processes about diversity and equity. [B:1, B:2, B:3]

Courses satisfying this menu will assist students to 1) explore global, historical, and cultural experiences of diverse populations, and 2) interrogate one's internal and external views and values for greater self-awareness.

Courses that satisfy this menu include the following:

- 3 hours from the following:
 - ANTH 101
 - BMIS 345 or BMIS 391
 - COMM 345
 - EDUC 211
 - ENGL 470
 - Foreign Language 200 or higher
 - GEOG 354
 - BIOL 308/CHEM 308/CSD 308/NURS 308
 - GLST 120-217
 - HIST 250, HIST 330, HIST 334, HIST 370
 - MUSM 131, or MUSM 231-233
 - PSYC 345
 - SOCI 370 or SOCI 442
 - SOCW 329

Menu: *Life and Physical Sciences (6 hrs)*

Detail: *Life and Physical Sciences (6)*

Courses within this domain use the methods and models of the natural sciences to describe, explain, and predict phenomena in the physical world; they employ empirical evidence, scientific principles, and interactions among natural phenomena to understand the world around us. [C.2, C.3, C.4]

Courses satisfying this menu are as follows:

- Any 100-299 course from AENV, ANSC, BIOL, ENVR, GEOL, **or** PHYS,
- **or** CHEM 100-220
- **or** ENGR 135, 136, 220, 221, 222,
- **or** NUTR 120

Menu: *Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 hrs)*

Detail: *Social and Behavioral Sciences (3)*

Courses within this domain help students examine behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events to understand the complexities of social systems. [A:2, B:2, C:1, C:2]

Courses satisfying this menu include:

- 3 hours from the following:
 - AGRB 261
 - ECON 260 or ECON 261
 - ENGR 350
 - FAM 251/FAMO 251 or FAM 262/FAMO 262
 - GEOG 235
 - ITC 125
 - JMC 100
 - PSYC 120-278/PSYO 100-299
 - EDUC 221
 - SOCI 100-399
 - SOCW 100-329
 - POLC 205
 - POLS 100-299
 - COMM 101, 231, 241, 310

Menu: General Education Elective (3 hrs)

Detail: *Any course from the previous menus (3)*

NOTE: The Writing Intensive and Cornerstone requirements remain part of the General Education Requirements.

General Education Curriculum: Associate's Degrees

Cornerstone (3)

Bible (6)

BIBL 101 + BIBL 102

Communication (9)

ENGL 111 (or ENGL 106/006 + ENGL 107/007) + ENGL 112

and

COMM (introductory public speaking course taught by COMM)

Math (3)

MATH 120-199, 238 or MATW 120-199

History and Political Science (3)

HIST 100-299 or POLS 225

Cultural Literacy (3)

Life and Physical Sciences (3)

Social and Behavioral Sciences (3)

Total: 33 hours