

**General Education Committee Special Report
July 30, 2015**

The General Education Committee met on the following dates:

May 21, June 4, June 11, June 18, June 25, July 2, and July 9, 2015

General Education Committee membership (* Senator):

Martin Bide, TMD (17)
Bridget Buxton, HIS (17)
Lars Erickson, LAN (16)
*Steven Irvine, BIO (17)
Jim Kinnie, LIB (17) Chair
Scott Lloyd, CBA (18)
Valerie Maier-Speredelozzi, ISE (15) (through June 30)
*Arthur Mead, ECN (18)
Bahram Nassersharif, MISE (18) (effective July 1)
Kelly Orr, PHP (16)
Travis Williams, ENG (18)
Laura Beauvais, Provost's Representative
Melissa Boyd-Colvin, Student Affairs Representative
Anne Hubbard, BIS, ASFCCE Representative (through June 30)
Jayne Richmond, Dean, University College

The General Education Committee recommends the following changes to the structure of the General Education program:

1. Separate Arts & Humanities into two distinct Student Learning Outcomes:
 - Humanities
 - Arts & Design
2. Eliminate the Integrative Student Learning Outcome
3. Limit to (3) three the number of general education courses within the same disciplinary code

The total number of Student Learning Outcomes (11) will remain the same and Grand Challenge will remain as an overlay to approved courses.

These changes were prompted by faculty reactions to the implementation workshops held in April and May 2015 and by concerns raised by the General Education Implementation Steering Team (GEIST) that general education guidelines established by NEASC for aesthetic appreciation, historical

perspectives, and ethical considerations were not explicitly addressed in the program. The pertinent NEASC paragraphs are:

NEASC 4.17 The general education requirement in each undergraduate program ensures adequate breadth for all degree-seeking students by showing a balanced regard for what are traditionally referred to as the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences. General education requirements include offerings that focus on the subject matter and methodologies of these three primary domains of knowledge as well as on their relationships to one another.

NEASC 4.19 Graduates successfully completing an undergraduate program demonstrate competence in written and oral communication in English; the ability for scientific and quantitative reasoning, for critical analysis and logical thinking; and the capability for continuing learning, including the skills of information literacy. They also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical, and social phenomena, and a knowledge and appreciation of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of humankind.

The General Education Committee reviewed the course rubrics relative to the NEASC guidelines and assessment of the Student Learning Outcomes and 1) expanded the language to more explicitly address aesthetic appreciation, historical perspectives, and ethical considerations, 2) added an ethics criterion to the Grand Challenge course guidelines, and 3) created a separate Arts and Design Student Learning Outcome. The design aspect was added to make the outcome more inclusive. In addition, because many programs had difficulty adapting existing capstone courses to align with the Integrative Student Learning Outcome, that Student Learning Outcome was eliminated from the program.

At the May 7, 2015 General Education Committee meeting, the Committee discussed amendments to the 2014 General Education legislation proposed by the Department of English and the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. An amendment was approved to limit the number of courses that may be used in common for major credit and General Education credit. The recommendation states:

Of the courses taken to complete General Education requirements, only three (3) courses, or up to 12 credits not exceeding three (3) courses, may share the same disciplinary code. An exception to the limit is allowed for the HPR (Honors Program topic) course code.

Following are proposed changes to Bill #13-14-21, University College and General Education Committee Report #2013-14-4: Revised General Education Program.

General Education Committee

Proposed Changes General Education University Manual Language

8.20.10 General Education. The foundation of all academic efforts begins with a broad base of knowledge covering all areas of human accomplishment and experience, broadly categorized as the arts, ~~the and~~ humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences. Therefore, URI students will gain exposure to the theories and practices of these ~~four three~~ areas, as well as on their relationships to one another, regardless of each student's major. Knowledge, by itself, is insufficient for development of well-rounded individuals. URI students will receive focused training and practice in the competencies of writing, oral communication, mathematics, and information literacy and apply all four to a wide variety of projects. Knowledge and competencies, however, are still insufficient. To be a fully functioning citizen, students must develop a sense of their place in society at the local, national, and global levels. URI students will be exposed to the experience and practice of responsibilities in civic engagement, global perspectives, and cultural competency to clearly perceive and engage with the world in which they live. Through a General Education program pursued across a college career and in conjunction with specialized work in one or more majors ~~Finally~~, the student must clearly demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge, competencies, and responsibilities in a coherent and comprehensive display of scholarly or practice-based work. This is the fundamental goal of the URI General Education program -- to enable students to develop themselves as scholars and individuals ready to employ and synthesize knowledge, competencies, and responsibilities, ~~and synthesis~~ to solve problems and to engage confidently with the personal, public, and professional spheres.

The General Education program will assess student exposure to eleven (11) Student Learning Outcomes in ~~three (3) four (4)~~ areas:

- A. Build **knowledge** of diverse peoples and cultures and of the natural and physical world.
1. Understand and apply theories and methods of the **science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) disciplines.**
 2. Understand theories and methods of the **social and behavioral sciences.**
 3. Understand the context and significance of the ~~arts and~~ **humanities** using theoretical and historical perspectives.

4. Understand the context and significance of arts and design using aesthetic and technical perspectives on form, creativity, and performance.

~~Understand and apply theories and methods of the **science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) disciplines.**~~

~~Understand theories and methods of the **social and behavioral sciences.**~~

B. Develop intellectual and interdisciplinary **competencies** for academic and lifelong learning.

4.1. **Write** effective and precise texts that fulfill their communicative purposes and address various audiences.

5.2. **Communicate effectively** via understanding audiences, listening, delivering oral presentations, and actively participating in teams or group work.

6.3. Apply the appropriate **mathematical, statistical, or computational strategies** to problem solving.

7.4. Develop **information literacy** to independently research complex issues.

C. Exercise individual and social **responsibilities**.

8.1. Develop and engage in **civic knowledge and responsibilities.**

9.2. Develop and exercise **global responsibilities.**

10.3. Develop and exercise **cultural competencies**

~~D. **Integrate and apply** these abilities and capacities, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities to lay the foundation for lifelong learning.~~

~~11. Demonstrate the ability to **synthesize** multiple knowledge perspectives, competencies, and responsibilities.~~

8.20.11 All baccalaureate students at the University of Rhode Island shall fulfill the University's General Education requirements as outlined in paragraphs 8.20.12 through 8.20.14 (for exception(s) see paragraph 8.20.15). Students may fulfill their University General Education requirements throughout their undergraduate career. Transfer students may receive General Education credit for courses taught at another institution insofar as such courses are equivalent to courses given General Education credit at the University of Rhode Island. ([#03-04--29](#))

8.20.12 All General Education courses will assess two Student Learning Outcomes, in the following configurations:

- ~~A~~ Knowledge (Area A) and ~~a~~ Competency (Area B)
- ~~A~~ Knowledge (Area A) and ~~a~~ Responsibility (Area C)
- ~~A~~ Competency (Area B) and ~~a~~ Competency (Area B)
- ~~A~~ Competency (Area B) and ~~a~~ Responsibility (Area C)
- ~~Integration (Area D) and a Competency (Area B)~~
- ~~Integration (Area D) and a Responsibility (Area C)~~

Students must take at ~~least a minimum of~~ three (3) credits of courses, or an approved sequence, for each of the eleven (11) assessed Student Learning Outcomes, plus additional courses to complete a minimum of 40 credits of approved General Education courses. Approved General Education courses ~~will~~ must cover at least 1 Student Learning Outcome fully; ~~some~~ courses may cover 2 Student Learning Outcomes fully. Overlap is allowed when a course fulfills two Student Learning Outcomes, but the credits cannot be double counted (within General Education courses) towards the total of 40. For information on having any requirement waived by proficiency examination see 8.20.15. (~~#03-04--29~~), (~~#05-06--25~~)

8.20.13 A student must take one (1) ~~Grand Challenge~~ course from those courses designated as a Grand Challenge courses by the suffix "G" following the course code and number (e.g. COM 100G), as part of the General Education requirements. A Grand Challenge course is an interdisciplinary General Education course that may be offered at any level (100 to 400). It is designed to facilitate students' exploration of multiple perspectives on areas of contemporary significance, including their ethical implications, and to provide a stimulating and innovative course experience that addresses significant global challenges and broadens students' understanding of the critical issues facing them in the 21st century.

8.20.14 Any course that assesses two (2) of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes may be submitted to the General Education Committee for approval to fulfill General Education requirements, regardless of that course's place in a ~~M~~major or prerequisites. No ~~C~~college, ~~D~~department, ~~M~~major, ~~M~~minor, or other program or course of study may require a student to choose a specific course to satisfy the General Education requirements, although courses that fulfill requirements or pre-requisites for majors which also happen to satisfy General Education requirements can be recommended through advising. Of the courses taken to complete General Education requirements, only three (3) courses, or up to 12 credits not exceeding

three (3) courses, may share the same disciplinary code. An exception to the limit is allowed for the HPR (Honors Program topic) course code.

8.20.15 Eligible students may have the requirement waived in any of the Competencies (B) or Responsibilities (C) of the Student Learning Outcomes by successfully passing a proficiency test before the beginning of their second semester of full-time registration. The General Education Committee shall determine criteria for eligibility no later than February of each year so that new students may be notified of these criteria as part of their Orientation. In February, the departments also shall report on these criteria and the results of the current year's proficiency testing to the General Education Committee. ([#03-04--29](#))

8.20.16 Topics for the Honors Colloquium and other Honors courses shall be considered for General Education upon request of the Honors Program and Visiting Scholars Committee. ([#03-04--29](#))

8.20.17 The General Education Committee shall make recommendations to the Faculty Senate regarding implementation and administration of General Education and shall report periodically its evaluation of the General Education Program, including a review of the appropriateness of courses for General Education. ([#03-04--29](#))

8.20.30 General Education is only a portion of any undergraduate degree program. Major and minor requirements along with electives contribute significantly to students' education. All programs should include in their curricula opportunities for students to develop further the skills that this General Education program addresses. As a consequence of the interaction between General Education and major programs, the University of Rhode Island expects that all programs will lead students toward:

- a. The ability to think critically in order to solve problems and question the nature and sources of authority.
- b. The ability to use the methods and materials characteristic of each knowledge area with an understanding of the interrelationship among and the interconnectedness of the core areas.
- c. A commitment to intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning.

d. An openness to new ideas with the social skills necessary for both teamwork and leadership.

e. The ability to think independently and be self-directed; to make informed choices and take initiative. [#03-04--29](#)

~~How are Grand Challenge courses defined?~~

- ~~• Freshmen through seniors~~
- ~~• Small or large sections~~
- ~~• Fall and spring semester~~
- ~~• Existing or new courses~~
- ~~• "GCH" or XXX XXX G to maintain program identity~~
- ~~• Broad set of challenges for society~~

~~- Multiculturalism and diversity~~

~~- Economy~~

~~- Climate change~~

~~- Peace and nonviolence~~

~~- Health~~

~~- Renewable Energy~~

~~- Social Media~~

~~- International policy~~

~~- Entrepreneurship~~

~~- Sustainability~~

~~- Social justice~~

~~- Emerging technologies~~

~~- Ethics~~

~~- Etc~~

Proposed Changes General Education University Catalog Language

Institutional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate General Education at the University of Rhode Island

A. Build knowledge of diverse peoples and cultures and of the natural and physical world.

1. Understand and apply theories and methods of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) disciplines.
2. Understand theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences.
- ~~3. Understand the context and significance of the arts and humanities using theoretical and, historical, and experiential perspectives.~~
4. Understand the context and significance of arts and design using aesthetic and technical perspectives on form, creativity, and performance.
- ~~2. Understand and apply theories and methods of the science technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) disciplines.~~
- ~~3. Understand theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences.~~

B. Develop intellectual and interdisciplinary competencies for academic and lifelong learning.

1. ~~4.~~ Write effective and precise texts that fulfill their communicative purposes and address various audiences.
2. ~~5.~~ Communicate effectively via understanding audiences, listening, delivering oral presentations, and actively participating in teams or group work.
3. ~~6.~~ Apply the appropriate mathematical, statistical, or computational strategies to problem solving.
4. ~~7.~~ Develop information literacy to independently research complex issues.

C. Exercise individual and social responsibilities.

1. ~~8.~~ Develop and engage in civic knowledge and responsibilities.

2. 9. Develop and exercise global responsibilities.
3. 10. Develop and exercise cultural competencies.

~~D. Integrate and apply these abilities and capacities, adapting them to new settings, questions, and responsibilities to lay the foundation for lifelong learning.~~

~~11. Demonstrate the ability to synthesize multiple knowledge perspectives, competencies, and responsibilities.~~

General Education Requirements

The University believes that all undergraduate students, regardless of their degree programs, need experience in the study of fundamentals that build on the student's previous education and continues through the undergraduate student years and beyond.

The foundation of all academic efforts begins with a broad base of knowledge covering all areas of human accomplishment and experience, broadly categorized as the arts, ~~and the~~ humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences. Students should recognize the interrelatedness of these areas of knowledge as they pertain to complex global issues. Therefore, URI students will gain exposure to the theories and practices of these ~~four three~~ areas, as well as on their relationships to one another, regardless of each student's major. Students will demonstrate critical thinking and evaluation in each of the following areas: 1) ~~science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM), arts and humanities;~~ 2) ~~social and behavioral sciences,~~ 3) ~~humanities,~~ and 4) ~~arts and design.~~ ~~science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) disciplines; and 3) social and behavioral sciences.~~

Knowledge, by itself, is insufficient for development of well-rounded individuals. URI graduates will need to demonstrate specific interdisciplinary competencies in personal, public, and professional venues to succeed in their studies as well as their future lives. URI students will receive focused training and practice in the areas of writing, oral communication, mathematics, and information literacy and apply all four to a wide variety of projects. These competencies will be developed over time at the foundational level and within discipline specific major courses, which will lay the foundation for success in their future careers and lifelong learning.

Knowledge and skills, however, are still insufficient. To be a fully functioning citizen, students must develop a sense of their place in society at the local, national, and global levels. URI students will be exposed to the experience and practice of civic

engagement, diversity, and global perspectives to clearly perceive and engage with the world in which they live. Recognizing that many URI students are already engaged contributors in their communities, these Student Learning Outcomes can possibly be fulfilled through co-curricular and experiential learning activities. Through a General Education program pursued across a college career and in conjunction with specialized work in one or more majors, ~~Finally,~~ the student must recognize the interrelatedness and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary problems and clearly demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge, competencies, and responsibilities. ~~Students must demonstrate this integration in a coherent and comprehensive display of scholarly or practice-based work.~~ This is the fundamental goal of the URI General Education program -- to enable students to develop themselves as scholars and individuals ready to synthesize knowledge, competencies, and individual and social responsibilities, in order to solve problems and engage confidently with the personal, public, and professional spheres.

Students are required to take a minimum of three (3) credits of courses, or an approved sequence, for each of the eleven (11) Student Learning Outcomes, plus additional courses to complete a minimum of 40 credits of approved General Education courses. Approved General Education courses ~~will~~ must cover at least 1 Student Learning Outcome fully; ~~some~~ courses may cover 2 Student Learning Outcomes fully. Overlap is allowed when a course fulfills two Student Learning Outcomes, but the credits cannot be double counted (within General Education courses) towards the total of 40. At least one course must be taken from a list of those courses designated as approved Grand Challenge courses by the suffix "G" following the course code and number (e.g. COM 100G). Grand Challenge courses that address major issues facing the world today. ~~Courses within the major that have been approved as general education courses may also be used to fulfill any of the 11 outcomes.~~ Of the courses taken to complete General Education requirements, only three (3) courses, or up to 12 credits not exceeding three (3) courses, may share the same disciplinary code. An exception to the limit is allowed for the HPR (Honors Program topic) course code. Competency and Responsibility Student Learning Outcomes are eligible to be waived through proficiency exams.

~~In their first semester, all entering freshmen and new transfer students with fewer than 24 credits are required to take URI 101, Planning for Academic Success, including community service provided by the Feinstein Enriching America Program, or an equivalent approved course (see Course Descriptions).~~

~~Students in the Honors Program can receive General Education credit for honors sections of courses that have been approved for General Education credit.~~

Transfer students can receive General Education credit for courses taken at other institutions as long as such credits are in courses equivalent to approved General Education courses at URI.

How are Grand Challenge courses defined?

- ~~Freshmen through seniors~~
 - ~~Small or large sections~~
 - ~~Fall and spring semester~~
 - ~~Existing or new courses~~
 - ~~"GCH" or XXX-XXX-G to maintain program identity~~
 - ~~Broad set of challenges for society~~
-
- ~~-Multiculturalism and diversity~~
 - ~~-Economy~~
 - ~~-Climate change~~
 - ~~-Peace and nonviolence~~
 - ~~-Health~~
 - ~~-Renewable Energy~~
 - ~~-Social Media~~
 - ~~-International policy~~
 - ~~-Entrepreneurship~~
 - ~~-Sustainability~~
 - ~~-Social justice~~
 - ~~-Emerging technologies~~
 - ~~-Ethics~~
 - ~~-Etc.~~