

Final Proposal from the Reimagining General Education Committee

April 25, 2022

Lauren Ingraham, Chair

Members: DeAnna Beasley, Elizabeth Johnson, Tom Lyons, Mary Marr, Sheena Monds, Abeer Mustafa, Kira Robison, Jeremy Strickler, Emily Thompson, Joel Wells, Talia Welsh, Oren Whightsel, Charlene Simmons, Rosite Delgado, Trevor Elliot, Ally Gentry, Shewanee Howard-Baptiste, Sherry Marlow Ormsby, Greg O’Dea, and Bethany Womack

Preamble

UTC has been on our current journey to update our general education program since Chancellor Angle’s 2020 State of the University Address. In that address, he noted that general education is the only program that all our graduates complete, so it must be one of the strongest and most meaningful programs we offer. He designated Provost Hale to establish a committee that would actively pursue that work. The Reimagining General Education committee was established in late 2020 and charged with exploring possible models and best practices, listening to key stakeholders, and proposing a final design to submit to appropriate faculty governance processes. The goal was to propose this design in the Spring 2022 semester for Fall 2023 implementation if adopted.

During Spring 2021, committee members sought input from various stakeholders including students, advisors, potential employers, alumni, and faculty. Six faculty town halls in March 2021 provided insight to the committee about concerns faculty had about re-visiting our Gen Ed design, observations they had about what’s currently working and not working in Gen Ed, and ideas they had for innovating in Gen Ed.

With this input we had from various groups in Spring 2021, the RGE committee worked tirelessly through Summer 2021 to develop program-level outcomes and associated rubrics to ensure that the proposed program would have clearly measurable outcomes. In early Fall 2021, the committee released those program outcomes and a category distribution prototype that reflected some of the priorities we’d heard and differed in substantial ways from our existing model.

REIMAGINING GENERAL EDUCATION: PROTOTYPE			
WRITING AND COMMUNICATION	QUANTITATIVE REASONING	NATURAL SCIENCES	BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
6 HOURS	3 HOURS	3 HOURS	6 HOURS
1 COURSE AT 1000-LEVEL 1 COURSE AT 1000- or 2000-LEVEL			2 COURSES FROM DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES
GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS NEW TO UTC			
HUMANITIES	DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION	GEN ED ELECTIVE	CHATTANOOGA-BASED PROJECT
9 HOURS	6 HOURS	3 HOURS	3 HOURS
2 BROAD HUMANITIES LEARNING OUTCOMES; 3 COURSES FROM DIFFERENT COURSE ACRONYMS		1 COURSE FROM ANY ABOVE CATEGORY	

Throughout Fall 2021, we encouraged faculty to submit comments and suggestions in response to the prototype through a web portal, and we received over 75 responses. In addition, 8 working groups were

established in October 2021 to make recommendations about how the committee should move forward with eight areas included in the prototype: Writing and Communication, Humanities, Natural Science, Behavioral and Social Science, Quantitative Reasoning, Diversity Equity & Inclusion, General Education Elective, and a Chattanooga-based Project.

Working Groups Membership

<p>Writing and Communication Beth Leahy, facilitator Jenn Stewart Catherine Quinlan Ashleigh Pipes Chad Littleton Jack Zibluk James Guilfoyle Lisa Burke-Smalley</p>	<p>Behavioral and Social Science Greg O'Dea, facilitator Jeremy Strickler Emma McDonell Melissa Jarrell Catherine Middleton Eddie Brudney</p>	<p>Humanities Mary Marr, facilitator Mark Johnson Andrew McCarthy Matt Greenwell Angie To Annie Tracy Samuel Stephanie Todd Lucien Ellington Jaclyn Michael Erika Shafer Josh Davies Dennis Plaisted Devori Kimbro</p>	<p>Natural Science Kira Robison and Lauren Ingraham, co-fac. Callie Adams Nominanda Barbosa Amy Brock-Hon Bryan Bulmer Dawn Ford John Lee Cheryl Murphy Rardy Spratt</p>
<p>Quantitative Reasoning Sherry Marlow Ormsby, fac. Thandi Klingbeil Matt Villanueva Ruthie Walker Josh Ozymy Chris Cox Mo Amadi Rebecca Shortridge</p>	<p>Diversity Equity Inclusion Niky Tejero and Kim Thomas, co-fac. Jessica Auchter Alex Zelin Takeo Suzuki Craig Laing Charlotte Ellington Oren Whightsel Sheena Monds Gerda Zinner Kristi Wick Kody Cooper Kathryn Taylor</p>	<p>Chattanooga-based Project Shewanee Howard-Baptiste, fac. Lucy Schultz David Witt Mike Thompson Chris Horne Owen Foster Sarah Einstein Chris Acuff Erkan Kaplanoglu Cecilia Wigal Bengt Carlson Megan Hartline Blake Pierce</p>	<p>General Education Elective Lynn Purkey, facilitator Jeff Davis Nicholas Boer Edwin Murillo Yaritza Moore</p>

After the working group reports arrived in February 2022, our committee had some additional questions for faculty to help us understand your preferences for what to include in a re-designed Gen Ed program. We issued a survey in March 2022 and learned the following:

- Support exists for a design and distribution structure similar to our current model (Model C in the survey).
- Support exists for addressing diversity and inclusion issues in Gen Ed.
- Support exists for a Gen Ed elective, but not enough for it to be included in the final design.
- Support exists for a Chattanooga-based project, but not as part of the general education program.

The final design we now propose reflects faculty feedback gathered throughout the process. Although the final proposal appears similar to our current design, it offers significant improvements over the current program:

Key Features of Final Proposal

- *Program* learning outcomes are clearly defined and measurable.
- Helps students make timely progress toward graduation by removing barriers:
 - No subcategories in Humanities and Fine Arts.
 - Behavioral and Social Science recommends but doesn't require study in two different areas.
- Aligns easily with existing Clear Path advising documents as existing general education exemptions remain in place.
- Combines Math and Statistics categories into "Quantitative Reasoning" to clearly emphasize that skill (6 hours).
- *Student* learning outcomes are fewer and clearly measurable.
- No category is aligned directly with a single department, inviting more participation in general education across UTC.
- The Nonwestern Culture category is re-purposed as "Individual and Global Citizenship," which focuses on students learning about multiple perspectives and experiences and how their own may overlap with or differ from those of others.

Moreover, the proposed design is in full compliance with SACSCOC requirements for a general education program.

The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that: (a) is based on a coherent rationale. 22 (b) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. (c) ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/ fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/ mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.

Section 9.3 Educational Program Structure and Content

The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement

Action Item: The committee proposes a newly designed 40-41 hour general education program that includes four program-level learning outcomes and a category distribution with student learning outcomes as detailed below.

Program-level Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of their general education program, students will:

1. Communicate effectively according to purpose using written, oral, and/or audio-visual methods.
2. Critique and evaluate information, concepts, theories, and claims.
3. Cultivate inclusion by recognizing, examining, and reflecting on the diversity of cultural and individual experiences.
4. Create, innovate, and adapt to take charge of your own learning.

Category Distribution (40-41 hours total)

Writing and Communication (6 hours)
 Humanities and Fine Arts (12 hours)
 Natural Science (7-8 hours)
 Behavioral and Social Science (6 hours)
 Quantitative Reasoning (6 hours)
 Individual and Global Citizenship (3 hours)

Proposed Categories of Study

Writing and Communication

In these courses, students will learn how to communicate effectively according to purpose using written, oral, and/or audio-visual methods. While these courses may have a focus on teaching writing, they also offer opportunities for students to develop projects in a range of formats, including oral or visual communication.

Students must complete six (6) credit hours (two courses) in Writing and Communication with a grade of C or better in both courses. One course is required at the 1000-level, and the second course at the 1000- or 2000-level.

Writing and Communication Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate awareness of context, audience, and purpose of the assigned task(s) including following expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or task(s) for organization, content, and conventions.
2. Students will use and document appropriate, credible research materials and integrate those materials with the student's ideas and/or primary research materials.
3. Students will reflect on their use of varying writing and communication strategies when composing, revising, and editing course projects, including responding to feedback they receive on emerging drafts.

Humanities and Fine Arts

A solid foundation in Humanities and Fine Arts will enrich students' understanding of the world, improve their empathy and flexibility of mind, and inspire appreciation for others in both personal and professional situations. Studies in Humanities and Fine Arts help societies answer big questions about how humans act and how they express themselves. What is the meaning, value, and purpose of human life? How might a just society function? How and why do people express themselves through fine arts?

Students must complete a total of 12 credit hours* (4 courses) in HFA from at least two prefixes (*i.e.*, ART, ENGL, HIST, MCLL, PHIL, etc.). UHON students may satisfy more than two courses from the UHON prefix because that college offers interdisciplinary general education seminars.

**6 hours required for Engineering programs*

Humanities and Fine Arts Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will critically interpret the works, products, and developments in artistic and humanistic fields and/or create such works themselves.
2. Students will assess the cultural and historical significance of the works, products, and developments in artistic and/or humanistic fields.
3. Students will apply appropriate disciplinary vocabulary for artistic and humanistic fields of study and/or demonstrate competency in reading or speaking a language other than English.

Natural Science

Science is an essential process for understanding the natural world around us. In the lecture courses, students will learn the steps of and reasoning behind the scientific method and how and why scientific knowledge changes over time as new evidence emerges. In the lab courses, students will have hands-on or applied experiences that help them better connect with and apply concepts from the lecture.

Students must complete seven or eight (7-8) credit hours (2 courses) in the Natural Sciences category. At least one course will require a corequisite lab experience which will be included as part of a 4-credit course or as an individual 1-credit course. Students are encouraged to check the specific category requirements for their major.

Natural Science Student Learning Outcomes:

Non-lab courses:

1. Students will explain how scientific knowledge develops over time as new evidence emerges.
2. Students will demonstrate scientific literacy by locating, evaluating, interpreting, and applying scientific information/data.
3. Students will explain how scientific developments impact society.

Corequisite lab courses:

1. Students will demonstrate the connection between scientific theory and application.
2. Students will apply the methods of science by testing hypotheses and reporting the results.

Four-credit hour courses that include both a lecture and a lab must include the learning outcomes for non-lab (lecture) and corequisite lab courses above.

Behavioral and Social Science

The Behavioral and Social Science category challenges students to examine the nature of human behavior and the systems and processes that are essential for understanding human societies. Identifying and solving major contemporary societal problems requires broad knowledge of the origins, mechanisms, and consequences of behavioral and social change. Well-prepared global citizens need a basic understanding of how individuals and institutions approach problems in order to build an equitable, just, and sustainable future. Courses in this category will introduce students to the major research methodologies used in behavioral and social sciences, foster cross-cultural understanding, and apply major findings and principles to the study of contemporary social issues.

Students are required to complete six (6) credit hours (two courses) in the Behavioral and Social Science category. It is recommended that these two courses be from different disciplines. Students are encouraged to check any specific category requirements for their major.

Behavioral and Social Science Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will explain behavioral and social phenomena, institutions, systems, or processes as they relate to a particular behavioral or social science.
2. Students will explain the importance of understanding how the diversity of human experiences and belief systems are shaped by historical processes, social structures, and institutional systems of power.
3. Students will evaluate how data, concepts, or methods within the behavioral and social sciences are used to support conclusions about individual, group, or institutional behavior.

Quantitative Reasoning

A foundation in quantitative reasoning is essential for understanding many of today's real-world problems. By exploring the power and limitations of quantitative evidence, students will learn to evaluate, construct, apply, and communicate these skills in their professional and personal lives.

Students must complete 6-7 credit hours** (2 courses) in Quantitative Reasoning.

***Art program majors complete 3 credit hours in Quantitative Reasoning.*

Quantitative Reasoning Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will interpret quantitative information presented in mathematical and/or statistical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, and words).
2. Students will present quantitative information in various mathematical and/or statistical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, and words).
3. Students will evaluate quantitative evidence and assumptions in decision-making, estimation, modeling, and data analysis.
4. Students will apply quantitative tools and technologies to make judgements and draw conclusions about problems in personal, professional, and public life.
5. Students will communicate quantitative decisions and solutions effectively and in context.

Individual and Global Citizenship

Recognizing multiple perspectives and experiences is foundational to general education as it enables students to be productive in society and contribute to the quality of life. Seeing oneself as a member of a global community means appreciating our shared future and how we use individual strengths to contribute to that future.

Students must complete 3 credit hours (one course) to satisfy this requirement.

Individual and Global Citizenship Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will assess how multiple perspectives and experiences, especially those previously underrepresented historically and currently, manifest in societies.
2. Students will apply conceptual or theoretical frameworks to issues on a local, regional, national, and/or global scale to understand how overlapping experiences affect people individually and as groups.
3. Students will demonstrate intercultural knowledge and competencies and a sense of community through interaction with the cultural, material, spatial, and/or historical dimensions of the diverse world around us.

Implementation

If approved in Spring 2022, catalog implementation would begin in Fall 2023.