
Gen Ed Structure Proposal

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To: academic-affairs-division-l@uni.edu
Cc: Brenda Bass <brenda.bass@uni.edu>

Thu, Sep 26, 2019 at 8:41 AM

Dear Campus Community,

The attached draft structure we are sharing is a *sketch* of a model for a revised liberal arts core (or general education program). We have developed this model based on the learning outcomes approved by the Faculty Senate in March (see attached), and based on campus wide feedback on three earlier draft models. We are offering it to the whole campus in this form, without all the details specified, in order to get feedback on some of the general principles before we work out the specifics. What follows are descriptions of those general principles.

1. Tiered structure. The first tier of this structure begins students' liberal arts education with a limited number of foundational skills: writing, oral communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning. The second tier focuses on more content-oriented outcomes. The third tier requires students to revisit the foundational outcomes in more advanced coursework. It lists critical thinking as an outcome in every course because of the disparate approaches to critical thinking in different fields, and because of the centrality of critical thinking to a liberal arts education.

2. Breadth for students; flexibility for instructors. Coursework in the second tier addresses a broad range of outcomes that are somewhat more content-oriented than first tier outcomes. The structure aims to make room for all liberal arts approaches without presuming which disciplines fit with which outcomes. Specifying outcomes rather than content gives instructors the flexibility to design courses that reflect their passions and interests, while also serving students' needs. For example, classes in the "Responsibility" category (outcomes 11 and 12) could conceivably address ecological responsibility, social responsibility, sexual responsibility, citizenship, or moral philosophy. Specifying outcomes does not prevent instructors from teaching in ways that reflect disciplinary structures and meet major requirements (e.g. "Introduction to Psychology") but it does encourage instructors to think about the needs of students from a wide range of majors, independently of the structures of their own disciplines.

3. Optional multidisciplinary certificate. In addition to five second-tier courses, one for each outcome listed, students take *either* any additional four second-tier courses, *or* a four course multidisciplinary certificate. The certificates are designed by faculty members who wish to offer a certificate on a topic of shared interest: e.g. justice or sustainability. The courses must come from multiple departments.

4. Nuts and bolts. This model is 37 hours long. Students cannot double count a class for both their second tier and a certificate.

The committee looks forward to hearing feedback from across campus in the upcoming listening sessions being scheduled and our visits to the senates. Committee members are also willing to visit individual departments upon request.

Sincerely,

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John Fritch, CHAS, Co-Chair, non-voting
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2 attachments

 **Sept 2019 Draft Gen Ed Structure Proposal.pdf**
55K

 **Approved General Education Learning Outcomes.pdf**
184K