

Senate Document SD 23-5  
Amended and Approved, 1/8/2024  
(Amended, 3/11/2024)  
(Amended, 4/20/2026)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fort Wayne Senate  
FROM: Steven A. Hanke, Chair of the Education Policy Committee  
DATE: 10/10/2023  
SUBJ: Revision of General Education Program

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WHEREAS, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) is the parent committee of the General Education Subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, the General Education Subcommittee requested that EPC review a resolution to revise the General Education program; and

WHEREAS, EPC completed the review and voted in support of the document going forward;

BE IT RESOLVED, That the attached resolution be considered by the Senate.

TO: Steven Hanke, Chair of the Education Policy Committee  
FROM: Carol Lawton, Chair of the General Education Subcommittee  
DATE: 8/28/2023  
SUBJ: Proposal for Revision of the General Education Program

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WHEREAS the current General Education program is primarily a distribution arrangement that limits the ability of students to experience a meaningful program that helps them understand how a broad and liberally based education prepares them for life and work after graduation, and

WHEREAS, more systematic assessment of General Education learning outcomes at the program level has been recommended by the Higher Learning Commission, and

WHEREAS, an Artistic Ways of Knowing category would ensure that students are exposed to the arts, an area integral to the quality of everyday life and valued by our university and community, and

WHEREAS, a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and/or Global Awareness focus in selected courses within Ways of Knowing categories would align to the Strategic Plan emphasis on embracing values that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and global awareness, and

WHEREAS, the current program includes courses that are not generally accessible to freshmen and sophomores across majors, such as in the Capstone category,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Education program be revised to provide students a more meaningful educational experience by framing the program in a way that promotes understanding of the purpose of General Education coursework and enhances student ownership of their path through the program; to ensure exposure to the arts and to issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and global awareness; to facilitate assessment at the program level through a common reporting structure; and to provide coursework outside of the major that sets the groundwork for further learning by being accessible to freshmen and sophomores, as detailed in the attached proposal.

In Favor

Jeff Casazza  
Steven Cody  
Carl Drummond  
Carol Lawton  
Andres Montenegro  
Sherrie Steiner  
Sarah Wagner

Against

Guoping Wang

Abstain

## Proposal for Revision of the General Education Program October 2, 2023

### **Purpose**

The proposed revision of the General Education program is intended to better align it with the Indiana College Core (ICC; <https://transferin.net/ways-to-earn-credit/statewide-transfer-general-education-core-stgec/>) as well as the PFW Strategic Plan (<https://www.pfw.edu/strategic-plan/documents/128-CHAN-Strategic-Plan-TruStee-Mtg-Booklet-2022.pdf>) and to address concerns with certain aspects of the current program. One concern with the current General Education program is that it is not widely perceived as a coherent program with a purpose and value distinct from that of a student's major. General education and degree program requirements are conflated by the practice of "prescribing" specific general education courses within degree plans, which creates confusion for students who change majors or who transfer a completed general education curriculum from another institution. In addition, students are able to avoid taking courses representing the Artistic Way of Knowing, an area of general education that has a strong presence at PFW. Students also may not be exposed in the current program to approaches that focus on diversity, inclusion, equity, and global awareness, as emphasized in the PFW Strategic Plan.

The proposed revision seeks to provide students with 1) a meaningful and coherent program that helps them understand how a broad and liberally-based education prepares them for life and work after graduation, and 2) a clear sense of the unique value of general education at PFW. Findings from surveys conducted in Fall 2021 of students who had already completed the General Education program (61 respondents) and faculty (89 respondents) support a desire to revise the current program to achieve these goals.

- A majority of faculty who completed the survey perceived either a need for a minor modification (37.1%, n = 33) or major modification (39.3%, n = 35) of the General Education program. Very few perceived no need for modification (23.6%, n = 21).
- The majority of faculty who responded believed that general education should promote intellectual growth (71.9% strongly agree), increased breadth of knowledge/perspectives across disciplines (67.4% strongly agree), and development of academic skills such as reading, writing, and critical thinking (73.0% strongly agree). They tended to agree that General Education courses should provide intellectual breadth outside of the student's major (51.7% strongly agree) more so than foundational knowledge for coursework in a major (only 30.3% strongly agree).
- Faculty who responded tended to perceive that the current program does not sufficiently promote intellectual breadth outside of the major. Rather, they perceived the current program to be characterized by prescription by departments of specified General Education courses for their majors (mean = 62.69 on a scale of 0-100). Moreover, relatively few students who completed the survey reported that General Education courses expanded their understanding of multiple disciplinary perspectives (19.7% Strongly agree), which may reflect lack of understanding of the meaning of "disciplinary

perspectives” or lack of awareness of multiple perspectives across General Education courses. (It is important to note that these were students who had completed their general education requirements.)

- Faculty who responded tended to agree that General Education goals and standards should be clear to students (58.4% Strongly agree). They had a relatively low perception of the coherence of the current program (mean = 40.07 on a scale of 0-100) and of students’ understanding of goals of the current program (mean = 30.38 on a scale of 0-100). They also tended to see the current program as having complicated requirements (mean = 55.26 on a scale of 0-100). Students who responded (and who had completed the program) tended to view General Education as a set of requirements to check off (52.5% Strongly agree).
- Faculty who completed the survey tended to agree that General Education should foster an atmosphere of inquiry where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are valued (69.7% Strongly agree). Diversity in this broader sense (backgrounds, perspectives) was more widely supported by faculty than singular emphases on diversity, equity, and inclusion (42.7% Strongly agree), global perspectives (38.2% Strongly agree), or interdisciplinary perspectives (28.1% Strongly agree). Relatively few students who responded (and had completed the program) perceived that General Education courses have helped them understand societal issues (41.0% Strongly agree).

The proposed revision would:

- Provide a purposeful framing of general education at PFW that makes the goals, value, and relevance of the program clear to students.
- Reduce the total number of required credits from 33 in the current program to the state-mandated minimum of 30 credits.
- Retain the current requirement for a minimum of 3 credits in each of Foundational Skills requirements.
- Require a minimum of 3 credits in the following five Ways of Knowing categories: Scientific, Behavioral/Social Scientific, Humanistic, Artistic, and Interdisciplinary categories. The Humanistic, Artistic, and Interdisciplinary categories replace the current Humanistic/Artistic and Creative/Interdisciplinary categories to ensure exposure to the arts (it is possible to complete the current program without having taken a course in the arts) and interdisciplinary inquiry. PFW stands out among the other Purdue campuses in that we have a College of Visual and Performing Arts with a rich set of course offerings in the fine arts that do not exist otherwise in the Purdue system. Part of the PFW experience of a well-rounded general education for all students should include an opportunity to be exposed to that component of our campus.
- Embrace values that support diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and global awareness, as called for in the PFW strategic plan, by adding a new requirement to take at least one course flagged as having a focus on DEI and/or global issues.
- Retain the flexibility of allowing student choice in the required 6 additional credits from Foundational and Ways of Knowing categories.

- Eliminate the current Capstone category, in which some courses are major-specific and do not serve as a true capstone that integrates across areas of general education.
- Give students a sense of ownership and meaning in their path through general education by creating suggested clusters of courses centered around themes that appeal to different interests.
- Require that Ways of Knowing courses have no prerequisites other than Foundational Skills courses with the exception of the beginning and intermediate foreign language courses, which may continue to use pre-requisites and their placement process. This measure will ensure that all general education courses are accessible to students early in their college careers to students from across majors.
- Provide a more systematic way to assess learning outcomes across the program.

## **Program Structure**

### **A. Foundational Intellectual Skills**

1. Written Communication – 3 credits minimum
  2. Speaking and Listening – 3 credits minimum
  3. Quantitative Reasoning – 3 credits minimum
- Foundational Intellectual Skills courses must meet all state learning outcomes in either written communication, speaking and listening, or quantitative reasoning.
  - Each course in this category cannot have any prerequisite coursework other than placement testing or one of the other Foundational Skills courses.
  - Departments that have courses that can be placed into at a higher level than current Foundational Skills courses are encouraged to apply for inclusion of those courses in Foundational Skills so that students do not take the associated lower-level courses under the mistaken assumption that only the lower-level courses fulfill the requirement.
  - These courses should be offered at least once a semester so that students have adequate access to them early in their program of study.

### **B. Ways of Knowing**

1. Scientific Ways of Knowing, as defined by state learning outcomes – 3 credits minimum
2. Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing, as defined by state learning outcomes – 3 credits minimum
3. Humanistic Ways of Knowing, as defined by the following adaptations of state learning outcomes for “Humanistic and Artistic” category. – 3 credits minimum
  - 6.1 Recognize and describe humanistic or historical works or problems and patterns of the human experience.
  - 6.2 Apply disciplinary methodologies, epistemologies, and traditions of the humanities, including the ability to distinguish primary and secondary

sources.

6.3 Analyze and evaluate texts, objects, events, or ideas in their cultural, intellectual, or historical contexts.

6.4 Analyze the concepts and principles of various types of humanistic expression.

6.5 Create, interpret, reinterpret, or critique humanistic works.

6.6 Develop arguments about forms of human agency or expression grounded in rational analysis and in an understanding of and respect for spatial, temporal, or cultural contexts.

6.7 Analyze diverse narratives and evidence in order to explore the complexity of human experience across space and time.

4. Artistic Ways of Knowing (includes arts appreciation and creative courses), as defined by the following adaptations of state learning outcomes for “Humanistic and Artistic” category. – 3 credits minimum

6.1 Recognize and describe artistic works.

6.2 Apply disciplinary methodologies, epistemologies, and traditions of the visual and performative arts.

6.3 Analyze and evaluate artistic works in their cultural, intellectual, or historical contexts.

6.4 Analyze the concepts and principles of various types of artistic expression.

6.5 Create, interpret, or reinterpret artistic works through performance or criticism.

6.6 Develop arguments about forms of human agency or expression grounded in rational analysis and in an understanding of and respect for spatial, temporal, or cultural contexts.

6.7 Analyze diverse artistic expressions in order to explore the complexity of human experience across space and time.

5. Interdisciplinary Ways of Knowing, defined by each approved course meeting the following learning outcomes – 3 credits minimum

7.1 Demonstrate broad understanding across multiple distinct disciplines emphasizing how these fields both influence and pose challenges to each other.

7.2 Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate diverse perspectives to effectively address complex problems.

7.3 Integrate and communicate ideas, arguments, solutions, and narratives derived from a variety of perspectives and disciplines.

7.4 Explore the ethical and global dimensions of interdisciplinary issues, such as socio-cultural context, responsibility, accountability, sustainability, privacy, and research integrity.

7.5 At least three additional learning outcomes selected from two different areas (1-4) of Category B, “Ways of Knowing.”

- Ways of Knowing courses must meet all learning outcomes for their category.
- Ways of Knowing courses cannot have any prerequisites other than Foundational Skills courses with the exception of the beginning and intermediate

foreign language courses, which may continue to use pre-requisites and their placement process.

- Ways of Knowing courses must be taught on a regular cycle, ideally once a year. Courses that are offered less frequently cannot assess learning outcomes on a regular basis, as detailed in the section on Course Assessment and Program Review.

### C. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and/or Global Awareness Requirement

Requirement to take at least one Ways of Knowing course used to satisfy General Education requirements that is designated as having a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or global awareness.

Courses designated as having a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or global awareness must meet one or both of the following learning goals:

- Develop students' understanding of and appreciation for a) diversity - the ways that differences among individuals and groups of people (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, age, nationality, disability, culture, religion) shape lived experiences and perspectives; and/or, b) inclusion - how deliberate attention to diversity creates a community where all members are respected, feel a sense of belonging, and feel that differences are valued; and/or c) equity - how a commitment to addressing inequalities for the purpose of achieving fairness and justice is a prerequisite for equal opportunity.
  - Develop students' understanding of and appreciation for how social, cultural, political, economic, and/or technological processes in societies outside the United States, present or past, or in North America before the arrival of Europeans, shape (or shaped) the human experience in those societies; and/or how globalization processes impact the United States or societies more broadly.
- Discrete learning outcomes for courses designated as DEI/Global Awareness will be developed based on the above learning goals.

### D. Six Additional Credits

Six additional credits from any Ways of Knowing or Foundational Skills category.

### E. Thematic Clusters

Thematic clusters provide students a mechanism to connect general education courses around a common theme. The purpose of the clusters is to give students the sense of coherence and meaning to general education coursework that is perceived to be lacking in the current program. To be listed in a thematic cluster, a course need not be wholly focused on the theme in question but should meaningfully engage with the theme in such a way that students will come away knowing more about matters related to the theme than

they did going into the course.

- Courses within Ways of Knowing categories will be organized and presented to students in specific thematic clusters. Clusters will be displayed graphically on the General Education website as pathways or maps through the program.
- Thematic clusters should include courses from at least three Ways of Knowing categories. Each of the courses in a cluster are required to meet all learning outcomes for their categories but a cluster need not comprise courses from all categories. Therefore, a cluster need not satisfy all learning outcomes of the whole General Education program.
- It is not required that Ways of Knowing courses belong to a cluster. Also, a given course may be listed in more than one cluster.
- Students will not be required to select courses in a thematic cluster but rather should be encouraged to do so as a way to take ownership of their individual path through their general education coursework. Completion of a thematic cluster could be tracked through an app (e.g., Sutable) with administrative support for entering data in the app. Students could be encouraged to list completion of a thematic cluster on their resumes. A LinkedIn badge could also be developed to recognize completion of a cluster.
- A full, robust, and meaningful list of thematic clusters will be accomplished through input from all faculty members who are interested in providing their ideas (e.g., through Town Halls). The General Education Subcommittee will then approve the addition of thematic clusters for the following catalog year. A mechanism will be provided for courses to be approved by the committee for inclusion in a new or existing cluster at the same time as the call for new course proposals. The committee will also determine whether any clusters should be retired at the time of General Education program review. It is expected that thematic clusters will remain largely stable from year to year.

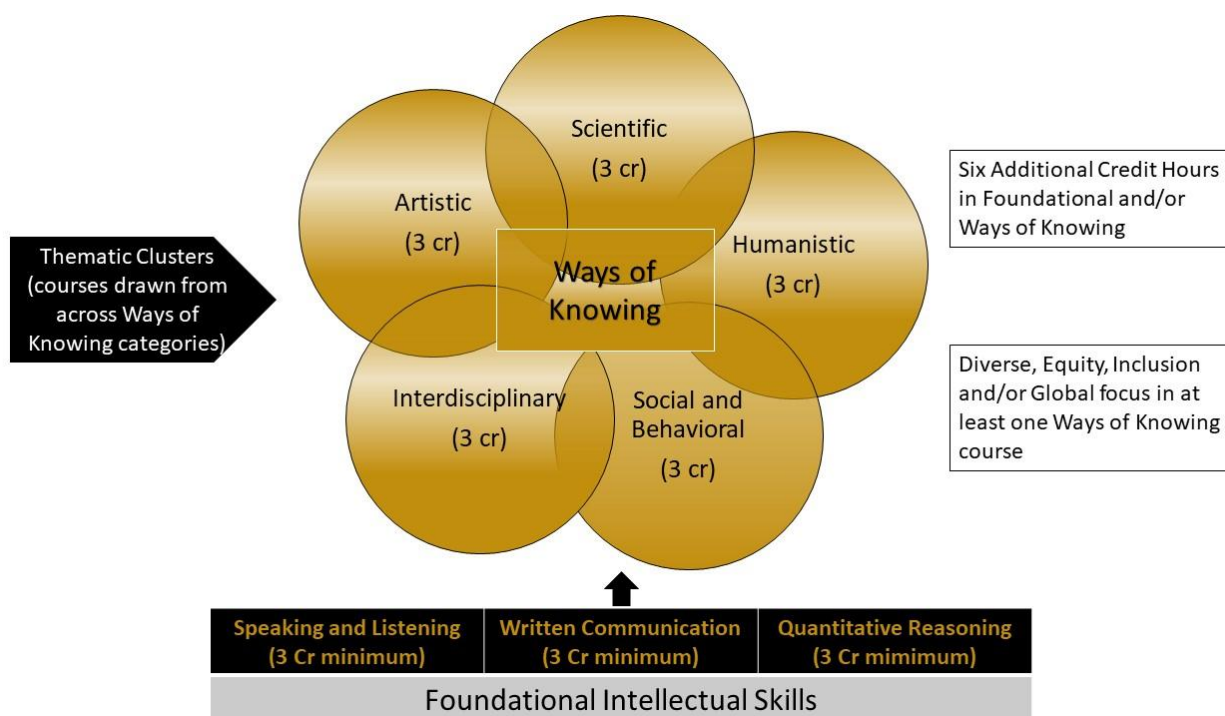
Thematic clusters may involve broad issues considered from multiple disciplinary approaches, or skills and experiences acquired across fields. The following ideas are meant as examples of thematic clusters:

- Expressions of the Human Experience - How have humans endeavored to conceptualize, understand, navigate, and express their humanity across time and place? What does it mean, and what has it meant, to be human?
- Technology and Digital Skills – How can technology and digital skills be used to facilitate communication, pursue knowledge, and enhance productivity of individuals and organizations?
- Global Visions - How might a global view of human affairs—past, present, and future—serve to shape, clarify, or sharpen how we understand both ourselves and others? What has, does, and might it mean to view the world, and the place

of human beings within it, from a global perspective?

- Humans and the Physical Environment - How do humans interpret, interact with, and impact the environment? How can these interactions be used to promote environmental sustainability?
- Intercultural Understanding - What does it take for people from different places and backgrounds to effectively understand and engage with one another? How might people from different or diverse backgrounds best work together to solve common problems?
- Self and Society - How, why, and to what ends have human beings created systems, structures, and other mechanisms to organize, manage, and better their world? Do the solutions of the past adequately address the problems of today, and those of the present the challenges of tomorrow?

### Overview of Proposed Program



	Current Credits	Proposed Credits
<b>Foundational Intellectual Skills</b>		
Written Communication	3 (minimum)	3 (minimum)
Oral communication	3 (minimum)	3 (minimum)
Quantitative Reasoning	3 (minimum)	3 (minimum)
<b>Ways of Knowing</b>		
Scientific	3 (minimum)	3 (minimum)
Social and Behavioral	3 (minimum)	3 (minimum)
Humanistic and Artistic	3 (minimum)	
Interdisciplinary or Creative	3 (minimum)	
Humanistic		3 (minimum)
Artistic		3 (minimum)
Interdisciplinary		3 (minimum)
<b>Additional Foundational Skills and/or Ways of Knowing</b>	9	6
<b>Diverse, Equity, Inclusion and/or Global focus in at least one Way of Knowing course</b>		0 (required)
<b>Capstone</b>	3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>

## **Framing of General Education**

The purpose of the General Education program at PFW will be made clear to students through a framing such as the following:

General Education at PFW offers you the opportunity to tailor your path with courses outside of your major that will excite your interests and enable you to make meaningful contributions to the world around you. It complements the in-depth knowledge and skills in your chosen field that you will attain through your major. Your general education experience will give you the foundation in broad intellectual skills and different ways of knowing that will continue to have relevance and meaning in your life long after you have graduated. General Education courses will guide you to:

- Think Creatively
- Communicate Effectively
- Reason Scientifically
- Understand the Human Experience
- Appreciate Artistic Expression
- Embrace Multiculturalism
- Adopt Global Perspectives

## **Course Assessment and Program Review**

Assessment of General Education courses currently involves a nonsystematic sampling of learning objectives based on assessment plans of individual degree programs. To improve program-wide assessment of General Education:

- All courses in each General Education category will cycle through a subset of the learning outcomes for the category every three years, such that all courses will assess the same outcomes in a given year. Faculty will assess the contributions of their courses to the General Education program using measures related to their courses. To simplify and standardize assessment, current assignments designed independently by faculty across multiple courses and sections will be evaluated using common rubrics for each of the General Education categories. Rubrics will be developed by the General Education Subcommittee with input from the larger faculty. This method will allow for both a more systematic examination of outcomes across the program and instructor flexibility in choice of appropriate assessment measures.
- A review of the General Education program will be undertaken every three years to ensure program sustainability. This review will include analyses of data such as term, number of sections, instructional modality of sections, enrollment cap, enrollment at census, number of grades  $\geq$  C-, number of D and F grades, and number and dates of Withdrawals. Analyses of these data will allow for deans and department chairs to coordinate offerings to meet student demand.

## Regulations

- To ensure a well-rounded education, students shall not take more than three courses from the same prefix across the General Education program, including both Foundational Skills and Ways of Knowing courses.
- As in the current program, a student must earn a grade point average (GPA) no lower than 2.0 across courses used to satisfy General Education requirements, with a grade of C- or better in each of those courses.
- A course can be included in only one category of the General Education program but it may appear in more than one of the listed thematic clusters.
- Consistent with the goals of providing breadth of education and fostering student ownership of general education, a major should not require that students take a specified general education course to fulfill a specific general education requirement. Moreover, the practice of specifying which General Education courses a student must take is in violation of the state regulation that transfer students who have been certified as completing general education requirements cannot be required to take additional general education courses. A given course may be used to fulfill both sets of requirements and students can be advised to take given courses for both purposes (to the extent that “double-dipping” is allowed by their department or college) but an academic plan cannot specify the courses students must take to fulfill General Education requirements. The VCAA or designee will monitor academic plans to ensure that they do not specify which General Education courses must be taken.
- To facilitate completion of general education at PFW for transfer students (if they have not yet completed the state requirements), transferred credits from courses equivalent to PFW courses will count as fulfilling the same General Education requirements. Transfer students who have not completed the state-mandated General Education requirements at their previous institution will have to meet the requirements of the General Education program at PFW.

## Course Reapplication and Approval Process

Courses in the current Foundational Intellectual Skills category that meet the prerequisite and other requirements in the proposed program will remain in Foundational Skills in the revised General Education program without the need for application. Courses that do not meet the prerequisite and other requirements will be removed. Courses in current Ways of Knowing categories will need to submit a brief application for review by the General Education Subcommittee by early fall, 2024 in order to be listed in the revised program in the 2025–26 Catalog. Applications for variable title courses should list all variations of the course that will meet the stated set of learning outcomes. The application will ask for the intended Way of Knowing category, confirmation that the course has no prerequisites other than currently approved foundational skills courses (unless the course in question is a beginning or intermediate foreign language course), assurance that the course fulfills all of the learning outcomes for its area, whether the course is appropriate for inclusion in one of the proposed thematic clusters, and, if applicable, a brief explanation of how the course fulfills the criteria to

be flagged as a DEI and/or Global Awareness course. In addition, if the course has not been offered on a regular cycle in the past three academic years, the General Education Subcommittee will ask for a brief explanation of how ongoing offerings could be regularized to at least once per academic year. Course syllabi will also be collected, but syllabi for current Ways of Knowing courses will not be reviewed and therefore do not need to be revised. If a course is being considered for inclusion in a thematic cluster, the application will ask how the theme will be addressed in the syllabus. The list of approved courses and thematic clusters will be transmitted by the committee secretary to the Registrar's Office in time for inclusion in the Catalog for the next academic year.