

# Memo

To: Members of the Academic Senate  
From: Ad Hoc GE Committee (Susan Nordlof, Allen Keppner, Karen Reiss, John Johnston)  
Re: Recommendations regarding CR General Education

---

The Ad Hoc GE Committee was convened by the Senate this semester to examine the current GE program description and student learning outcomes and to recommend changes or revisions that will strengthen the program and help the college to manage and assess it effectively.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. The approval of revised GE program description and outcomes (see attached document).
2. The creation of a General Education Committee **as a standing committee of the Academic Senate.**

The work and scope of such a committee may include the following:

- Ongoing discussion of the college's GE philosophy to insure that General Education at CR will provide students with a balanced, meaningful experience.
- Development, implementation, and oversight of criteria and a process for vetting new GE courses.
- Ongoing liaison with the Curriculum Committee, the Assessment Team, and institutional groups focused on enrollment management.
- Development and implementation of a plan to generate student learning outcomes for the six GE subject areas.

(Regarding this task, the GE document approved by the Senate in Spring 2007 included this note: "Eventually, this material will be followed by focused area outcomes for each of the six General Education areas: Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities, Writing, Oral Communication, and Analytical Thinking/Math. Student learning outcomes expressing those area outcomes will be developed at the course level for general education courses")

- Examination of the GE program in its relation to the Liberal Arts degrees (which did not exist when the original philosophy and outcomes were approved in 2007).
- Examination and comparison of CR's GE program with the GE programs for the CSU and UC systems with the aim of helping students who wish to pursue both an associate's degree and university transfer.

## GENERAL EDUCATION STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The task of general education is to prepare students to understand and deal constructively with the diversity of the contemporary world, through exposure to ideas and ways of knowing and through an expanded capacity for cultural and global awareness and sensitivity. By constructing a framework of intellectual growth, general education should develop lifelong competencies in critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative and scientific reasoning, and problem solving.

The general education program at College of the Redwoods will help students develop and deepen the capacity to think; obtain knowledge on which preparation for the future depends; acquire a fuller understanding of cultures; strengthen the foundation for informed citizenship, participation in community life, and public leadership; and sustain vocational and career goals. In other words, exposure to the general education curriculum should prepare students to live in a rapidly changing world, but also to participate conscientiously in its transformation.

## GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The following learning outcomes—**Effective Communication, Critical Thinking, Global Awareness**—will be addressed in all general education courses. Each general education course must address **at least one** of the bulleted outcomes under **each** the three categories.

### Effective Communication

Students should be able to

- Communicate complex aesthetic, cultural and intellectual ideas
- Communicate complex mathematical and scientific ideas
- Analyze and adapt communication on the basis of audience
- Generate, compose, revise and communicate ideas clearly, orally and in writing
- Read with comprehension
- Listen with comprehension
- Use technology to process information
- Conduct research using appropriate methods and tools

*Assessment might include student performance of tasks such as the following:*

- Write a clear, well-organized essay response to support an argument or conclusion, using appropriate examples and/or documentation
- Summarize or paraphrase, either orally or in writing, material from assigned readings
- Find, evaluate, use and communicate information in its various formats
- Present a speech making use of audience analysis
- Use mathematics to express a complex idea

## **Critical Thinking**

Students should be able to

- Evaluate ideas presented in writing, media, speech or artistic representations
- Evaluate sources of information
- Analyze/interpret creative expressions, resources, data
- Use problem-solving skills effectively
- Apply the scientific method and scientific reasoning
- Apply mathematical and scientific concepts to analyze relationships
- Make value judgments and ethical decisions

*Assessment might include student performance of tasks such as the following:*

- Assess bias in a written or oral message
- Distinguish between data and interpretation
- Describe the importance of testing hypotheses
- Select and use appropriate data or resources to support a conclusion
- Define a problem clearly, allowing for multiple perspectives
- Distinguish ethical considerations in decision making
- Extract relevant data from a problem, arrange it in table, graph or formula and obtain correct results

## **Global\*/Cultural Context**

Students should be able to

- Analyze issues from multiple perspectives
- Express an awareness of cultures in a diverse global community
- Explain the relationships between humanity and the natural environment
- Analyze issues within their historical context

*Assessment might include student performance of tasks such as the following:*

- Articulate understanding of interconnected global issues
- Compare different world views relevant to specific ethical questions
- Articulate understanding of historical influences on contemporary world
- Articulate historical influences on language and contemporary knowledge
- Describe cultural influences on the spread of knowledge
- Identify the effects of social context on individual behavior

\*This document defines “global” widely and generally:

- Of or relating to the entire earth as a planet—*global environmental change*
- Relating to or embracing the whole of something or of a group of things
- Worldwide, international, world, intercontinental—*the global economy*
- Comprehensive, overall, general, broad, universal, extensive—*a global view of the problem*

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR AA DEGREE LIBERAL ARTS AREAS**

### **Liberal Arts: Mathematics**

- 1. Complete projects and assignments both independently and cooperatively.**
- 2. Communicate mathematical ideas effectively, both in oral and written presentations.**
- 3. Use numerical, graphical, symbolic, and verbal representations to solve problems and present logical arguments.**
- 4. Use computer technology to verify and interpret results, visualize functions, and explore mathematical concepts.**

### **Liberal Arts: Science**

- 1. Appropriately apply methods of scientific inquiry to answer questions, and explain the limitations of this approach.**
- 2. Apply concepts of physics and chemistry to quantitatively explain observable phenomena.**
- 3. Collect and analyze data, evaluate sources of error, and synthesize this information into clear and organized reports.**
- 4. Use numerical, graphical, symbolic and verbal representation to solve problems and communicate with others.**
- 5. Follow detailed instructions to perform laboratory techniques and procedures safely and effectively.**
- 6. Discuss the historical context of science as it relates to current thought, and the role that emerging technologies have played in theory development.**

### **Liberal Arts: Science Exploration**

- 1. Discuss the process of scientific inquiry and be able to explain its strengths and limitations in investigating the natural world.**
- 2. Provide specific examples of the classification of the natural world, drawn from both life and physical sciences.**
- 3. Discuss the historical context of science as it relates to current thought, and the role that emerging technologies have played in theory development.**
- 4. Distinguish science from pseudoscience from non-science in approaches to explaining the natural world.**
- 5. Anticipate and articulate possible ethical, cultural, economic and political implications of scientific information and resulting technologies.**

### **Liberal Arts: Social and Behavioral Sciences**

- 1. Extract and analyze information from primary and secondary sources relevant to the social and behavioral sciences.**
- 2. Critically evaluate current and historical issues in the social and behavioral sciences.**
- 3. Create arguments that demonstrate knowledge of primary and secondary source information.**

- 4. Compare and contrast the intellectual frameworks that various disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences have taken with respect to social power relations, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, class, gender, and religion.**
- 5. Explain diverse human viewpoints and experiences from an empathetic perspective.**

#### **Liberal Arts: Humanities And Communications**

- 1. Present orally or in writing the effective use of research materials in a coherent argument.**
- 2. Generate an artifact\* that reflects on the relationship between the reader, text and the changing social, cultural and historical contexts.**

**\*An “artifact” is a sample of student course work—a specific assignment, presentation, or project.**

- 3. Critically analyze and interpret a broad variety of texts, including, but not limited to written texts, speeches, and various media.**

#### **Liberal Arts: Fine Arts**

- 1. Demonstrate progressive technical mastery of one or more artistic mediums.**
- 2. Recognize and evaluate competing aesthetic and critical claims.**
- 3. Critically analyze a range of creative works using varied analytical perspectives.**
- 4. Explain, verbally or in writing, relationships between cultural, socio-economic, and political factors and artistic movements.**

#### **Liberal Arts: Business**

- 1. Select and apply the tools of technology as they relate to personal and business decision making**
- 2. Communicate effectively as writers, listeners, and speakers in social and business settings**
- 3. Participate effectively in real or simulated business transactions in both the domestic and international arenas.**