

WOU General Education Update

The principal goal of education is to create individuals who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done.

Jean Piaget

Preparing for General Education Advising

Western Oregon University Students who enroll for the 2019-20 academic year will be the first group of students taking part in the new General Education program. We expect, however that there will be students who are already enrolled and would like to take advantage of the new program when it becomes available.

There is a lot of behind the scenes preparation going on to help both new and continuing students and their advisors be successful with General Education. The General Education program is working with the University Registrar and Student Success and Advising to prepare to help students who are not only transferring from another institution, but also our “internal” transfers who started fulfilling LACCs and would like to apply those credits to the new program. Expect updates throughout the Winter and Spring on these exciting developments.

Some of what we’re working on includes:

- Development of a cross-walk of LACC course requirements with new General Education requirements.
- Preparation for transfer articulations by reviewing alignment to General Education content criteria of all community college courses transferred to WOU over the past four years from our most frequent transfer partners.
- Planning for better use of Banner to help students easily identify and choose General Education requirements during registration.
- Exploring Degree Tracks programming that will allow students to change their catalog year for General Education without having to change their catalog year for their major program.
- Establishment of petition process for students regarding General Education requirements.

One of the most exciting developments is how much easier it now is for students to request to have courses applied to their General Education requirements. By using the same [requirement petition form](#) used by the registrar’s office, students now only need to go to one location to handle their General Education requests. For the new program (2019-20 and beyond), the General Education program will be reviewing all General Education requirements. In the current program (2018-19 catalog year and prior), individual LACC course requests are still reviewed by the Academic Divisions; all broader General Education requirements including pre-2019-20 BA/BS requirements, W or D requirements, LACC category requests (e.g. changes to a sequence, credit shortfalls, etc.) are reviewed by the General Education program.

Proposal Deadlines

To be included in the 2019-20 catalog, course proposals need to be to the General Education Committee by:

First Year Seminars

January 8, 2019

Integrating Knowledge

February 12, 2019

Course proposals that do not make these deadlines will be invited to propose for General Education inclusion in the 2020-21 AY catalog.

Learning Communities

Want to know more about learning communities? In the most basic terms, a learning community is a set or cluster of courses that are offered in the same term, share a cohort of students and are linked thematically or topically. Our program has a learning communities pilot that would offer students an optional pathway towards fulfillment of general education requirements.

We envision learning communities as being composed of pairs of courses:

- Offered through different departments.
- Where both courses would fulfill a general education requirement, such as the proposed Foundational Skills, Exploring Knowledge, and the Integrative Learning categories.
- And with enrollment typically capped at 25.

First Year Seminars are one possible mechanism for forming a learning community, and we've heard from several faculty and staff who are excited about exploring this possibility, but this isn't the only way that learning communities can benefit our students. When considering building a learning community, the following considerations add value via mission alignment:

- Could be recommended to students interested in particular majors, minors, and certificates.
- Meant to emphasize breadth and interdisciplinarity.
- Entail integration between skills instruction and content areas.

Learn more at <http://www.wou.edu/gened/learning-communities/>

Getting information to students about First Year Seminars

First Year Seminar proposals are due on January 8. Following General Education Committee Review of proposals on January 15, we will be building a list of available topics for dissemination to students prior to registration (beginning with Fall 2019) so that they are aware of their options. This information will be provided via the General Education website, in the information packets provided to students at SOAR events, and embedded in the registration system.

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