

# WOU General Education Update

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*To teach is to learn  
twice over.*

*Joseph Joubert*

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## **Here we go...**

As we prepare to launch our new General Education program in a few months, we wanted to reflect on our experience and what this program means to us.

### **From Breeann Flesch, General Education Committee Chair**

I believe that educational equity, fairness and opportunity in education, is an important part of creating a more just society. This is why the overhaul of the general education curriculum has been so important to me these last few years. No longer does our general education require the knowledge of a hidden curriculum to successfully navigate the various category rules. And our students can now go to one office to get help understanding exceptions and petitions. Moreover, with alignment to general education learning outcomes and the thorough general education assessment plan, we can work hard to ensure that students are getting a comprehensive general education. These changes will help all students, but will be specifically impactful for first-in-family college students navigating higher education for the first time. I believe this curriculum is a big step towards educational equity at WOU, and that is why it means so much to me.

### **From Shaun Huston, First Year Seminar Coordinator**

I had been interested in reforming and strengthening general education at WOU for a number of years, both because I think our students needed better opportunities to grow through those requirements and also to make it possible for more students to succeed and thrive in meaningful ways, not just those who benefit from having attended a strong college preparatory high school. The First Year Seminar is a critical part of these goals and I am privileged to have the job of coordinating the implementation of these courses. I was humbled by the level of interest and participation in the first round of Seminar proposals, not just from those who submitted proposals, but also those who took the time to learn more about the program and who will be submitting in the future or supporting others in their participation. The next few years are going to be strange and challenging, but I believe these efforts will enable us to better serve our students.

### **From Erin Baumgartner, General Education Director**

This program belongs to all of us. That's what I'm most excited about. No individual discipline or department is individually responsible for the General Education program. Anyone can propose and teach a First Year Seminar, and it was so amazing this year to see the range of engaging proposals from all over campus, including from some of our colleagues in Student Affairs. Each of the General Education course categories emphasizes learning outcomes and what we want our students to gain from their experience in the program. The thoughtful creative approaches that we saw in the way that people approached thinking about fitting their courses into this program means that we have Education, Economics, Dance, ASL, Geography, History, Psychology, Philosophy and other courses side-by-side in the same category. This program integrates a truly liberal education for students, and brings together faculty and staff to collaborate in new ways for student success. It's been such a pleasure to work with faculty and staff all over campus to get this program off the ground and I'm really looking forward to continuing that work – now with our students too.

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*New year, new chair!*

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Congratulations to Camila Gabaldón, elected to serve as the General Education Committee chair in the 2019-20 academic year.

And enormous gratitude to Breeann Flesch for her leadership over the past two years.

## General Education Committee Report

*Provided to Faculty Senate in summary of the year's activities:*

To implement our new General Education Program, the GEC:

1. Reviewed Course Petitions for Inclusion in the Program or Modification of Existing Course:
  - a. Foundations Petitions Reviewed: 50
  - b. Exploring Knowledge Petitions Reviewed: 122
  - c. First Year Seminar Petitions Reviewed: 53
  - d. Integrating Knowledge Petitions Reviewed: 55
  - e. Existing Course Modifications Reviewed: 5
  
2. Developed and Refined Processes Related to the new General Education Program:
  - a. Developed the General Education Transfer Guidelines (Faculty Senate voted to approve on November 27th, 2018)
  - b. Reviewed the General Education Assessment Plan developed by the GE leadership team
  - c. Developed Process and deadlines for future FYS call for proposals
  - d. Developed Student GE exceptions petition process and reviewed many petitions (over 130 to date)
  - e. Developed Writing and Mathematics Criteria
  - f. Updated committee charge and ex-officio membership
  - g. Reviewed the General Education Proposal Handbook, including changes to the GE petition forms
  
3. Aligned our New General Education Program to transfer pathways:
  - a. Oregon Transfer Compass Alignment (Faculty Senate voted to approve on November 27th, 2018)
  - b. WICHE Passport Alignment (Faculty Senate voted to approve on May 14th, 2019)




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Student planning guide:

Thanks to Denise Visuano and her team in Publications and Creative Services, we have an amazing new student planning document for General Education. Check it out at:

[http://www.wou.edu/gened/files/2019/05/gen\\_ed\\_advising\\_guide-2019-singlepages-1.pdf](http://www.wou.edu/gened/files/2019/05/gen_ed_advising_guide-2019-singlepages-1.pdf)

You can also find our tips to help new students at SOAR advising via our website or download:

<http://www.wou.edu/gened/files/2019/05/SOAR-advising-tips.pdf>

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