

CSU Campus GE Policy Feedback Form

Please Reply by 5/12/17

Campus: California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Please check as applicable for your campus. This is a:

- ☒ Faculty-only response*
- ☐ Student-only response
- ☐ Administration-only response
- ☐ All-campus response

This response has been developed by our campus's General Education Governance Board.

Campus Feedback on Executive Order 1100—General Education Breadth Requirements

The Chancellor's Office invites campus input about how [EO 1100 General Education Breadth Requirements](#) could be revised to: (1) achieve better clarity; (2) ensure equitable treatment of our students, including transfer students and first-time freshmen; and (3) streamline graduation requirements. From each of the six sections of [EO 1100](#), we ask for your advice regarding following:

- Applicability of the policy (Article 1, page 1),
- Pathways to fulfillment of general education requirements (Article 2, page 2),
- Premises of CSU General Education Breadth (Article 3, page 5),
- Distribution of General Education Breadth units (Article 4, page 7),
- Transfer and articulation (Article 5, page 9),
- Implementation and governance (Article 6, page 17).

Please reply to feedback@calstate.edu by Friday, May 12, 2017.

Applicability of the policy (Article 1, page 1)

Improve clarity for students, faculty and advisors

- If this were the only document that a constituent referenced, then the Article certainly lacks clarity. For instance, the reference to Title 5 Sections 40405.2 and 40405.3 with regard to the lower-division general education requirements could easily obscure the policy's intentions for some readers.
- In addition, for some constituents the phrase "enrolled continuously" may be confusing. Does this require that the student be enrolled in summer sessions? What about a term break for a co-op, internship, or personal reasons? Enrolled continuously since when? The intent seems to be that this Order applies to those that are enrolling for the first time beginning or after fall 2016, but also to those that enrolled in a "one off" class prior to fall 2016 (i.e., they were not actively pursuing a degree), but not to those with an enrollment gap after finishing the lower-division requirements. The wording for this article can be clarified.

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- As written, the Article is particularly unclear for students in the near term. However, as time passes, advisors may struggle to apply the policy to exceptional cases, which may become more frequent. The issues with clarity may lead to different interpretations of the intent of the Article.

Ensure equitable treatment of and opportunities for our students, including first-time freshman and transfer students

The Article defines applicability equally for both CSU and California Community College students by nature of a specific start date and a requirement for continuous enrollment at a campus of either sort. The Article does not address those students transferring from a university outside of the CSU and California Community Colleges. In particular, it is unclear how this policy applies to international or out-of-state transfer students.

Streamline graduation requirements

This Article doesn't attempt to streamline graduation requirements, though Section 1.2 of the Article does preclude requiring additional general education requirements for those pursuing an additional major program or baccalaureate degree once the GE requirements are met.

Other

Pathways to fulfillment of general education requirements (Article 2, page 2)

Improve clarity for students, faculty and advisors

- **Section 2.2.2** states that a C or better is necessary for courses in written communication in the English language, oral communication in the English language, critical thinking and mathematics or quantitative reasoning. It would be clearer, especially for students, if these were mapped onto the General Education Areas. In addition, the EO needs to be updated to show that a C- is actually the required on Area A, not a C.
- **Section 2.2.5** may be difficult to understand. Perhaps the section could be rewritten: "Each campus is authorized to make reasonable adjustments in the number of units assigned to any of the five required distribution areas. However, in such cases the total number of general education units required shall not be fewer than 48 semester units or 72 quarter units."

Ensure equitable treatment of and opportunities for our students, including first-time freshman and transfer students

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This section of the EO makes no recommendations for supporting students who struggle to earn a C- or better in Area A. Presumably these students may struggle with written and oral communication. On our campus, we know that many of these students are multi-lingual writers or are from under-represented populations. It would be helpful if the EO suggested outreach for these students so we can support their success, rather than just letting them keep retake course without any meaningful intervention.

Streamline graduation requirements

The residency requirement expressed in Section 2.2.4 may constitute an impediment to graduation for some transfer students. Eliminating this requirement would allow students who have completed GE at an CSU campus to make progress to degree more easily after transfer.

Other

Premises of CSU General Education Breadth (Article 3, page 5)

Improve clarity for students, faculty and advisors

No Suggestions.

Ensure equitable treatment of and opportunities for our students, including first-time freshman and transfer students

Section 3.3.2 specifies that students who cannot demonstrate basic competence should be required to take steps to overcome those deficiencies. A statement of the particular obligations for a campus in terms of remediation would help to direct campuses in how to assist these students.

Streamline graduation requirements

This article does not address the streamlining of graduation requirements.

Other

Distribution of General Education Breadth units (Article 4, page 7)

Improve clarity for students, faculty and advisors

- Listing the expectations for each GE area in bullet form instead of paragraph form would make the document easier to read.

For example: Students completing A3 Critical Thinking will:

- Understand logic and its relation to language.
- Develop elementary inductive and deductive processes, including an understanding of the formal and informal fallacies of language and thought.
- Learn to distinguish matters of fact from issues of judgment or opinion.

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- Develop the abilities to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas.
- Learn to reason inductively and deductively; and to reach well-supported factual or judgmental conclusions.

Reorganizing the content this way also highlights the degree to which these expectations are not always consistently written in the form of a student learning outcome: "Understand logic and its relation to language," for instance, is not in same the form as, "Learn to distinguish matters of fact from issues of judgment or opinion." Some of these statements set expectations for students; others statements set expectations for courses. We suggest that the language be refined and made more consistent and parallel.

- The expectations for Area E, Lifelong Learning and Self-Development, are not as clear as for other areas. This probably reflects the fact that the Area E focus is not as clearly defined as the focus of other areas.
- In Area D, the requirement that, "Coursework taken in fulfillment of this requirement must be taught from more than one disciplinary perspective," is confusing. Does this mean that each course must have some interdisciplinary aspect to it, or does this mean that the whole spread of Area D needs to ensure that student will emerge having been exposed to more than one discipline? The lack of specificity in Area D distribution (unlike Area C, which is quite clear) seems to be what the statement is attempting to address, but, as written, the meaning and intentions are unclear.

Ensure equitable treatment of and opportunities for our students, including first-time freshman and transfer students

- Diversity and inclusion are barely addressed in EO 1100. There is a reference to "human diversity" in section 3.1 and "diverse cultural groups" in article 4, but there are no learning outcomes.
- We understand that the algebra prerequisite in B4 must be revised to align with the new Quantitative Reasoning policy:
Courses in subarea B4 shall have an explicit intermediate algebra prerequisite, and students shall develop skills and understanding beyond the level of intermediate algebra. Students will not just practice computational skills, but will be able to explain and apply basic mathematical concepts and will be able to solve problems through quantitative reasoning.

Streamline graduation requirements

This article does not address the streamlining of graduation requirements.

Other

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Transfer and articulation (Article 5, page 9)

Improve clarity for students, faculty and advisors

There is considerable duplication in the statement of GE certification requirements for the CSU and for the community colleges. Could the section be streamlined?

Ensure equitable treatment of and opportunities for our students, including first-time freshman and transfer students

This article does not address “equitable treatment of and opportunities for our students.”

Streamline graduation requirements

EO 1100 allows double-counting

5.3.2.2 Additional Lower-Division Graduation Requirements

Full certification does not exempt students from unmet lower-division graduation requirements that may exist outside of the general education program of the campus awarding the degree. Campuses need to be careful not to over-specify GE requirements that double-count for the major.

Other

Implementation and governance (Article 6, page 17)

Improve clarity for students, faculty and advisors

- In isolation, Article 6 clearly outlines the responsibilities of individual campuses to implement the general education policy. In the greater context of the Executive Order, and with consideration for transfer students, it is not clear that the recommendations in section 6.2.1 are tenable. In particular, 6.2.1a recommends requirements be planned such that they are perceived as “interrelated elements,” and 6.2.1b suggests “themes.” Yet, by dictating unit requirements for each Area, the Order seemingly limits (or at least complicates) flexibility in defining such interrelated themes (6.2.1g somewhat echoes this concern).
- 6.2.3 suggests that the General-Education Committee should have some purview over the “fiscal and academic support” for the implementation of the GE requirements, but does not outline the actual role of the committee in this regard. Moreover, these responsibilities as stated do not reflect our campus structure. Clarifying what the CO means when referring to “fiscal and academic support” for GE would be useful. For instance, would fiscal support come from colleges, departments, or the Provost’s office? How should GE be fiscally supported on campuses? In addition, what kind of academic support is possible or reasonable?
- In Article 6, section 6.1, the minimal membership of the Chancellor’s General Education Advisory Committee is defined to draw, “in largest part,” from the instructional faculty of the California

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State University. The membership as currently listed on the calstate.edu website does not clearly reflect this. There are no members explicitly identified as instructional faculty.

- While the CSU GE Advisory Committee has a mix of faculty and other representatives from across the CSU, it doesn't appear that current members that have a strong background in issues related to diversity and inclusion. If inclusion is a goal, perhaps a faculty member with disciplinary expertise in diversity and inclusivity should be included in the committee. It may also be helpful to have a student serve on the committee to solicit their perspective and learn from their experiences.

Ensure equitable treatment of and opportunities for our students, including first-time freshman and transfer students

- As above, in isolation, the provisions of this article are equitable for all students, but some recommendations are at odds with the realities of transfer students. Recommending that each campus implement the general education requirements as they see fit (with "interrelated elements" and "themes") complicates transfer credit for students coming from a campus with a different implementation. In addition, the Article does not address international and out-of-state students.
- 6.2.4 recommends that "each campus provide for...advising specifically oriented to general education" to achieve "greater cohesiveness in student choices of course offerings." the goal of this kind of advising is understandable, it can also serve to create a disconnect between the major and GE in the student's education. A more holistic approach to advising where major courses and GE courses are considered in tandem might better support students.

Streamline graduation requirements

This article does not address the streamlining of graduation requirements.

Other

The distinction between lower-level, skills-based courses and upper-level courses emphasizing "integrative experiences" (6.2.1.f) seems to negate the possibility of developing lower-level, integrative courses; working with that kind of high impact practice at the lower-level could aid in retention, especially for first-generation students and other students who struggle with transitioning to college. In effect, regarding lower-level classes as purely "skill based" undervalues the work of these essential, foundational classes.

Other advice

In terms of equity and inclusion, the CSU should consider moving away from using gendered terms like "freshman" (which is used on this very form) and instead use terms like "first-year student." A linguistic shift such as that one can send clear signals about the power of language on college campuses.

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Submitted by _____ Date _____

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