

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

New GEN ED Program





A New Vision for General Education

Susan Miller-Cochran

Executive Director of General Education

Professor of Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English (RCTE)

Associate Faculty, Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Program (SLAT)

millercochran@email.arizona.edu

John Pollard

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Curricular Innovation

University of Arizona Honors College

Center for Undergraduate Education Scholarship Distinguished Fellow

Professor of Practice

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

jpollard@email.arizona.edu

OUR VISION





Values & Priorities

The new curriculum model emphasizes:

- ❖ Student **agency** & exploration
- ❖ **Connected** & scaffolded student learning
- ❖ **Relevance** to & flexibility for a changing world
- ❖ **Ways of thinking** & ways of knowing to contextualize content
- ❖ **Reflection** on learning across the curriculum
- ❖ **Collaboration** across disciplines
- ❖ High **quality teaching** & engaged learning
- ❖ **Holistic assessment** & periodic review of courses



Shifting Our Approach

FROM

Teacher-centered courses

Segmentation

Knowledge

Topics

Explicit

Tradition

From *what* we know

TO

Learner-centered courses

Connection

Reasoning and Perspective Taking

Questions

Implicit

Relevance

How we think, know, & do



Shifting the Student Experience

FROM

Requirement

Prescribed

Disciplinary Knowledge

Academic

From *what* we know

TO

Relevance

Customizable

Perspective-Taking

Contextual

How we think, know, & do



What's Changing?

- ❖ Two new course categories that replace Tier 1 and 2 sequence
- ❖ The creation of a General Education Office to:
 - partner with colleges/units on enrollment management and scheduling
 - provide faculty support
- ❖ The development of two* **attributes** :
 - Writing
 - Diversity
- ❖ Two 1-unit courses bookending student GE experience:
 - An introductory GE course
 - A concluding portfolio course



Curriculum



Foundations*

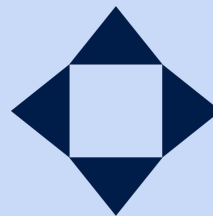
9 units
(variable)

*Does not change in
new Gen Ed

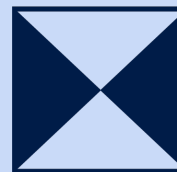


Introduction
(First-Year Course)

1 unit



Exploring
Perspectives
12 units



Building
Connections
9 units



Pinnacle
(ePortfolio)

1 unit

Writing & Diversity
Attributes



Introduction to Wildcat Perspectives (tentative title)

A new 1-unit course required of incoming freshmen. The goals of the course are to facilitate:

- ❖ Introducing students to General Education & its conceptual foundations (interdisciplinary thinking, perspective-taking, reflection on learning)
- ❖ Start ePortfolios in Digication & develop digital literacy practices
- ❖ Transitioning to UArizona, including:
 - Supporting student well-being
 - Encouraging academic success



Foundations (no changes)

Typically 9 units, Foundations courses engage students in critical thinking and prepare them for future college work. Students must take or accomplish the equivalency of the following:

- ❖ Quantitative thinker (3 units)
- ❖ Writer (6 units*)
- ❖ Second-language learner (proficiency requirement*)

*Number of units is variable depending on method of meeting writing & second language requirements



Wildcat Pinnacle

A new 1-unit course required of all UArizona students as a capstone portfolio course to their General Education experience. The goals of the course are to help students:

- ❖ Identify potential connections between General Education courses & their major / professional aspirations
- ❖ Develop an ePortfolio that reflects on their achievement of the General Education learning outcomes
- ❖ Reflect on their experience in General Education as a whole



Exploring Perspectives

These courses introduce students to ways of thinking, knowing, and doing from the perspective of different disciplinary domains. Students will explore and practice the varied approaches of the:

- Artist
 - Humanist
 - Social Scientist
 - Natural Scientist
- ❖ Choose at least one course from each perspective (12 units minimum)
 - ❖ Students must take at least one course that carries the Diversity Attribute, & one that carries the Writing Attribute



Building Connections

These courses encourage students to bring together knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines and/or perspectives in order to foster more comprehensive understanding of questions, ideas, challenges, and/or problems. Students will utilize interdisciplinary approaches and multi-perspective taking to practice being:

- Conceptual Thinkers
- Creative Problem Solvers
- ❖ Choose three courses from any categories (9 units minimum)
- ❖ Students must take at least one course that carries the Diversity Attribute, & one that carries the Writing Attribute



Pedagogy - A Hallmark of Gen Ed Curriculum

Students should have the opportunity to have a high-quality, engaged learning experience. As such, all Gen Ed courses will:

- Engage students in active and collaborative learning
- Provide ample opportunities for success through regular, low-stakes assessments (formative and summative)
- Have clearly stated learning outcomes and objectives
- Use evidence-based practices and inclusive pedagogical approaches
- Emphasize disciplinary/interdisciplinary perspective-taking
- Elevate diverse voices and scholarship whenever possible (e.g. BIPOC, disabled people, LGBTQIA+, women, and others who have been marginalized in their abilities, contributions, and knowledge)



Signature Assignments

*All Exploring Perspectives and Building Connections courses will include at least one **signature assignment** (developed by instructors) that will be included in students' GEePortfolios. These will allow students to utilize highlighted perspectives from each course to showcase learning, skills, and personal reflection.*

- Connect to at least one course learning outcome
- Can be creative (websites, videos, performances, etc.)
- Should consider an external audience during development and highlight student strengths (skills, writing, growth)
- Can be the same assignment as Diversity and/or Writing Attribute and if so needs to satisfy all criteria
- Will be essential for the course approval process



Thanks and Questions are Welcomed!

Susan Miller-Cochran

Executive Director of General Education

Professor of Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English (RCTE)

Associate Faculty, Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Program (SLAT)

millercochran@email.arizona.edu

John Pollard

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Curricular Innovation

University of Arizona Honors College

Center for Undergraduate Education Scholarship Distinguished Fellow

Professor of Practice

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

jpollard@email.arizona.edu