

GE Task Force | Frequently Asked Questions

What's wrong with our current GE?

- Most crucially, our current GE does not provide a shared educational vision linked to the university mission. A GE program that articulates a clear set of ideas can help students and faculty carry these ideas forward into the rest of the curriculum and co-curriculum.
- Our current GE assessment plan is unworkable. There is no way to link what students learn and what's happening in courses to our stated outcomes, short of devising a stand-study for WASC. Increasingly, both the CSU and WASC expect integrated, embedded assessment, and our current GE program makes that impossible. The new GE program will achieve such assessment without adverse impacts on faculty, particularly during the lead-in to accreditation visits.
- The current "distribution model" creates a chaotic experience for students in which they often fail to connect course work to essential learning.

What are the General Education Goals and Outcomes?

These are found in the Senate document “Revisions to SP 06-06 General Education Learning Goals and Outcomes”. There are 7 Goals, with each associated with from 2 to 4 outcomes.

The first Goal incorporates the mission pillars, and could be highlighted within the portfolio as an area where students not only upload the course artifact that demonstrates having met the outcome, but also reflect on their mission-based learning experience.

Can current GE courses still be GE courses?

Programs with courses currently meeting some area of the A-E distribution will be invited to show that their courses offer students the opportunity to meet specific GE outcomes. Upon approval by a faculty committee, course listings will be keyed to the outcomes, so that students can choose those courses based on what outcomes they have yet to fulfill.

Can an existing "UDIGE" course be converted into a Required Element Level 2 course?

Yes. It may be that some current UDIGE courses can be taught at a more introductory level. Others may remain closer to their current form in Level 3. Some UNIV 392s could might also be appropriate at Level 2.

Are there examples of existing courses that could be converted into Level III courses?

Yes, 498s, UDIGEs, capstones.

Are Level 1 and Level 2 iterations of First Year Experience and Second Year Experience?

Yes, all Level 1 and 2 courses will include some shared outcomes and course materials and/or methods. Courses may also include outcomes and materials beyond the shared ones, but the shared ones will ensure a common educational experience that will anchor other co-curricular aspects of our first and second year experiences.

What is the timeline for the new GE program?

Fall 09: Faculty feedback, refinement of vision

Senate approval of the new University Studies vision and direction

Spring 10: University Studies Coordinator Appointed

Development and Senate approval of policies

Required Elements levels fully developed and NEW? courses approved by GE and Curriculum Committees

Fall 10: Faculty teams devise rubrics keyed to GE outcomes

University Studies Outcomes Elective courses approved by GE Committee or faculty task forces

Development or adoption of e-portfolio software

Catalog copy

Spring 11: University Studies Director hired

Scheduling and staffing of Required Elements level classes for Fall 11

Faculty training for e-portfolio

Fall 11: Freshman class and transfers begin new University Studies program

How will students know which courses will help them fulfill which outcomes?

Each semester there will be a chart linking outcomes to Required Elements and courses that have been approved as meeting specific outcomes. Students can consult the chart and choose classes accordingly. This chart will be posted online for ease of access. Since it will change frequently, it should be electronic. The office of University Studies will be responsible for ensuring that it is updated before course schedules are sent to students.

How will it be determined that a student has met an outcome?

For courses identified with specific outcomes, the faculty member teaching the course will determine whether the particular product (i.e. paper, experiment, other assignment) has met the outcome. Students will be able to upload documents to the e-portfolio only upon faculty approval. Students might also petition to have accomplishments outside the classroom evaluated by a faculty committee for a particular outcome, using the rubric for that outcome.

What if a particular assignment only partially fulfills an outcome? (for instance, the rubric won't only have meets/doesn't meet categories, but partially meets, etc) How can that be noted?

The e-portfolio will be the student record. If a particular project partially meets an outcome, then the next project/paper/assignment can be looked on to build on that first part and then possibly complete the outcome.

Who will develop rubrics for the GE Goals and Outcomes?

Faculty with expertise with specific outcomes will develop rubrics for evaluating student work and course suitability. These groups will also approve student petitions to meet outcomes with work from outside of courses.

How will the Required Elements classes be defined and outlined?

For each level, faculty will be invited to join a working group charged with 1) writing learning outcomes that will be shared by each section of the course and that map to GE Goals and Outcomes; 2) identifying essential elements of course content and pedagogy; 3) and choosing a set of readings that will form a portion of the syllabus for all courses in that level. These shared elements will create a common intellectual foundation and learning experience for students and faculty alike. Faculty teaching the courses will be free to build upon these foundations in ways that reflect their own expertise.

What courses will transfer students have to take? And what if they are GE certified?

Transfer students will be required to take 9 units of Required Elements Levels 2 and 3 even if they are "GE certified". These courses are essential to inculcating students into the CSUCI mission the habits of mind that are characteristics of our graduates.

Who will students "petition" to?

The new University Studies Director will funnel this to the faculty groups that wrote the rubrics for each level.

Will students take fewer units of GE?

No. All students are required to take the full 48 units of GE, even if they are granted petitions to meet GE outcomes with work from outside courses. It could be possible, however, for a student to include the 6 units of American Institutions for Title V that currently lie outside of GE within the 48 units should the required content be included in a Required Elements Class. For example, POLS 150 might be linked to a Composition course in a Level 1 course with outcomes concerning civic engagement and communication.

How many outcomes will students be allowed to petition outside of courses?

The Senate approved GE outcomes contain 7 Goals, with a total of 21 outcomes. Faculty will need to decide the proportion of outcomes we allow students to meet with work outside of courses. Suggestion: 4 outcomes.

Will there be a rubric for each outcome within the seven goals?

There will be seven rubrics, one for each goal, that include within them each outcome associated with that goal.

What if a student meets all the outcomes but they still have GE units left to fulfill?

Lucky student! This student can take any courses they want to minor, double major, learn a language, build technical skills, study a field related to their major...anything!

How does this GE model benefit students?

1. Student learning is grounded in the mission of the university.
2. Students will share a common set of ideas, skills, and experiences that they will take forward to elective and major courses. Faculty in subsequent courses will be able to identify and build upon this foundation.
3. Students who elect to meet some GE outcomes with work completed outside of usual courses will have electives with which to double major, minor, or enhance preparation in a major.
4. Students will think in terms of learning outcomes rather than seat time in a class.

How will faculty (all kinds) be given the opportunity on how to incorporate outcomes, be normed, the use of rubrics, assimilated into the new model?

Workshops through Faculty Development office, University Studies administration, program level.

How will students learn about this new University Studies/GE program, how to use the e-portfolio?

The e-portfolio will be featured at most orientations, and each Required Elements level (especially Level 1 courses) will emphasize teaching students to understand and use the e-portfolio. Student perceptions of the e-portfolio are related to our goal of shifting student perceptions from GE (an obligation vaguely connected to their educational and career goals) to University Studies, where the e-portfolio helps them take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning. The e-portfolio allows students to see and assess their own growth over time; it allows them to chart their own progress prior to waiting for the mysterious and intimidating grad check. It is our intention to have a e-portfolio that allows students to customize portfolio views for employers and graduate school applications.

To what degree will courses listed as potentially satisfying a GE outcome include that outcome in the course syllabus as a student learning outcome?

Including the GE outcome as a student outcome in the course would be a reasonable requirement for approval in the University Studies Program. Course may include additional outcomes that may be necessary to meet other goals of the course (as a disciplinary prerequisite, for example), but the GE Outcomes will be listed separately so that students can clearly see which outcomes the course will help them meet.

What will be the procedure for transitioning from the current to the new system?

For example, there was the idea to make UNIV 110 a course common to first year students, to inculcate the mission into their perspectives and bind them more tightly to the university (aiding in retention as well as the intellectual benefits). However, the obstacle of the fact that many juniors and seniors wait until those years to take it proved too great. How will we deal with the transition years?

We would REQUIRE entering freshpeople Fall 2011 to take a course in Level I, and require the next year as sophomores that they take Level II, so they can't wait until year 3 and 4 as they have been doing. For transfers entering Fall 2011, they'd be required to take a Level II or Level III their first semester. For students already enrolled before Fall 2011, they'd continue with existing GE rules, though we could identify which old GE categories fit with the new University Studies course offerings so that those "old" students can take advantage of the new program.

Yes, and if critical thinking principles are designated as part of the common Level 1 material, UNIV 110 can be retired, (or from an alternative POV spread out more broadly in the curriculum.

Would it be possible to add second language study under Goal 4. "Communicative effectively using a variety of formats"?

Yes, the rubrics for each goal can specify the means of achieving the outcomes under each Goal. For example, the rubric for Outcome 4.2 "Write effectively in various forms" could include a second language as one "form."

How will this new system improve systematic and timely GE assessment for program improvement and for WASC, etc.?

With the eportfolio, the University Studies administrator can pull data and student work for specific Goals at any time to assess achievement of learning outcomes.

Are there faculty or programs on campus already using rubrics for outcome assessment?

Yes. For example, the Education program uses an eportfolio for credential students. The composition faculty meet together to evaluate writing using rubrics. The library has used rubrics to assess information literacy outcomes.

What happens when a student transfers to another CSU? Are the University Studies requirements translatable into standard CSU breadth requirements?

Yes, Goals 5, 6 and 7 map to old A-E subject areas, so students transferring out of CSUCI to another CSU could get certification from us that courses satisfy old GE?

Might the new program make the CSUCI multicultural graduation requirement now separate from GE unnecessary? This is one area where General Education committees deal with many student petitions and transfer students perceive bottlenecks in completing their GE.

Yes. Multicultural perspectives is included in Goal 1, Outcome 1. Courses at Level II would give students the opportunity to satisfy this outcome.

One suggestion has been to pull the mission outcomes in Goal 1 into a section of its own in the e-portfolio, where students not only provide evidence that they have met the multicultural perspectives outcome, but also have a space in the e-portfolio for reflection on that learning process. The reflection would be an extra step that solidifies the centrality of multicultural perspectives and other mission elements.

Executive Order 1033 states that instruction approved to fulfill the subject-area GE requirements "should recognize the contributions to knowledge and civilization that have been made by members of diverse cultural groups and by women as well as men." So any University Studies/GE course can include a multicultural outcome.

Will Level II and Level III courses include STEM disciplines, which would support the university's STEM strategic initiative?

Yes. A Level II course might emphasize mathematics and quantitative reasoning as part of an integrative course. UDIGE courses with STEM aspects that already exist can become Level III.

Where does undergraduate research fit in?

Level II courses are an opportunity to introduce students to the methodologies of a number of disciplines, as well as interdisciplinary methodology in their sophomore year. This may get students thinking about research earlier, and prepare them for robust projects in their junior and senior year.

What might students get out of the new program?

Students who now see GE as “just” checking of boxes, not related to their major, extra stuff they don't need, etc. instead will have the opportunity to see how one discipline relates to another in a problem-solving and/or community context.

The e-portfolio offers the potential for students to reflect on the mission-based outcomes and their interrelationship to their studies and their growth as citizens.

The e-portfolio also offers the possibility of different “views” of the stored evidence of having achieved learning outcomes. Students could present aspects of their university studies work to prospective employers who will see a well-rounded, articulate student, presenting a “public face” for their intellectual achievements.

What might faculty get out of the new program?

Faculty involved in teams building rubrics for each outcome and getting trained and/or training others in applying rubrics (sometimes referred to as “norming”) have the opportunity to develop their teaching skills.

As is true now for those who do it, faculty team who team teach as part of University Studies have the opportunity to broaden their own research methodologies, bring new questions to their work, through interaction with colleagues from different disciplinary backgrounds.

Having assessment built in to the University Studies courses will save faculty time during course level, program, and university-wide assessment and review.

What are the relative costs of the new program?

University Studies administration and release time for “faculty seminars” for rubric development and norming are new and on-going costs. Once the rubrics are developed, the faculty release time could diminish to training and being trained in their application.

E-portfolio acquisition is a cost up front that will payoff in the long run when Assessment release time is greatly diminished as University Studies administration can easily do assessment from information stored and database analyses. An E-portfolio system also has the potential to streamline the GE portion of academic advising.

Faculty development opportunities are built-in to the system at no separate cost.