

DCCC Proposal for a New Los Rios AA/AS General Education Pattern Based on Changes to Title 5

Background

At their September meeting, the CCCC Board of Governors approved a [proposal to change the graduation requirements for associate degrees](#), which includes an updated general education (GE) pattern. The new 21-unit pattern, based on Cal-GETC, is a minimum requirement and colleges may add additional local requirements.

Area	Subject	Courses (minimum 3 semester/4 quarter units)
1	English Communication, Oral Communication, and Critical Thinking English Composition Oral Communication and Critical Thinking	1 course 1 course
2	Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning	1 course*
3	Arts and Humanities	1 course
4	Social and Behavioral Sciences	1 course
5	Natural Sciences	1 course
6	Ethnic Studies	1 course
Total Courses (units)	Courses must be transfer-level courses. *Exceptions: Students in career technical programs seeking a certificate or associate degree with specific requirements, as dictated by the program's advisory or accrediting body, that cannot be satisfied with transfer-level coursework. See EDC §78213	7 courses (21 semester units)

The new pattern adds an Ethnic Studies requirement and splits the current Communication and Analytical Thinking area into two separate areas: Oral Communication and Critical Thinking, and Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning. It does not include Living Skills or American Institutions areas, which are in the district's current 21-unit GE pattern.

The DCCC formed a workgroup to discuss whether additional local GE requirements are needed for the Los Rios colleges, and to formulate a proposal and analysis that could act as a starting point for faculty discussion across the district. The rationale they used in creating the proposal was that the benefit of adding local requirements must clearly outweigh the costs for students.

The workgroup shared its proposal and analysis with the DCCC at its September and October meetings. The proposal was also vetted by each of the colleges' curriculum committees prior to being approved by DCCC in October.

Proposal

The DCCC recommends that:

1. the district adopts the new associate degree GE pattern and adds to it a 3-unit Living Skills requirement identical to the current area IIIa and IIIb requirements, which would require updating Board policy and regulations.
2. the district allow students working toward an AA or AS degree to choose between using that new GE pattern or using the Cal-GETC transfer GE pattern, or any other transfer GE pattern (e.g., CSU GE Breadth and IGETC) , which would require updating Board policy and regulations.
3. each college clearly indicates, in its listing of courses that are approved for the new local GE pattern, which courses are also approved for Cal-GETC.

Analysis

When deciding to add a Living Skills requirement, the workgroup considered the following and determined that the benefits outweigh the costs for students.

Pros:

- The new GE pattern mirrors the existing pattern for the most part, but does not include Living Skills, which is part of the existing pattern. So, this is not adding a new requirement, but simply keeping an existing one in place.
- Courses in this area allow students to learn additional skills that benefit them throughout their lives.
- Community college students benefit from HCD courses that assist them in learning to plan and study and/or selecting a degree or career path.
- Community college students from underserved communities may not have had access to courses in nutrition and physical education.
- Courses that fall in pathways often fall in this category.
- The work experience courses in the current area IIIb list support the colleges' and district's equity goals as these courses help provide living wages for historically disproportionately impacted students and support long-term career goals for these students. This support applies to students working toward both certificates and transfer. Earning a living wage and building work experience will enable transfer students to sustain their educational goals.
- Having access to the full spectrum of career development courses on a GE pattern is at its core an equity issue. Students choose a guided pathway upon enrollment but may not have the support to build social capital. Without the strong support of the courses in IIIb, these

students will lack the support needed to move forward in their careers. These effects may be even more exacerbated for veterans and ESL students.

Cons:

- It adds three more units to the GE pattern.
- It is not required by Title 5.
- It adds a requirement that is not part of Cal-GETC.

When deciding to not add an American Institutions requirement, the workgroup considered the following and determined that the benefits do not outweigh the costs for students.

Pros:

- The new GE pattern mirrors the existing pattern for the most part, but does not include American Institutions, which is part of the existing pattern. So, this is not adding a new requirement, but simply keeping an existing one in place.
- It prepares students for transfer to a CSU, which has an American Institutions graduation requirement.
- It endorses that the Los Rios colleges expect our students to demonstrate competency in "the operation of representative government under the Constitution of the United States, and the principles of state and local government established under the Constitution of [California]", "appreciation and understanding of the basic institutions, ideals, knowledge, and skill necessary for ... citizenship", and "critical thinking, problem solving, and literacy skills in regard to American historical, political, governmental, economic, social, and intellectual issues as they relate to both domestic and foreign affairs."
- It prevents the creation of a two-tiered system, where students who graduate from CSUs are expected to demonstrate an understanding of how institutions within our representative system of government work and how they can influence them to serve their interests and their communities, while graduates of Los Rios Community Colleges are not.
- It enables students to effectively participate in our system of self-governance. People can only choose effectively when they understand the choices, the impact, and the context in which those choices are embedded.

Cons:

- It is not required by Title 5.
- It would add an additional 3 units to the GE requirements, bringing the total number of units up to 27 if the 3-unit Living Skills requirement is also approved.
- Political Science and U.S. History courses are already included in the new GE pattern, under Social and Behavioral Sciences.

- Students preparing to transfer to a CSU are expected to use a transfer GE pattern, like Cal-GETC, so this would not apply to them. It would apply primarily to CTE students.
- American Institutions will continue to be a CSU graduation requirement.
- American Institutions will be on the Cal-GETC certification. It is currently on IGETC for CSU and CSU GE certifications.
- American Institutions courses are included in the CSU GE, IGETC, and Cal-GETC transfer GE patterns.
- The majority of our students transfer to a CSU and therefore will still be advised to take American Institutions courses.
- With AB 928, students will be guided to an ADT. And, when students are being advised it is usually for multiple schools, making sure they take into account American Institutions CSU graduation requirements.

When considering allowing students a choice of GE patterns, which is permitted by Title 5 but not by current Board policies and regulations, the workgroup considered the following.

Pros:

- Students using a local AA/AS degree to prepare to transfer would be able to take the correct set of courses, without any additional local requirements.
- Students could meet the requirements for multiple degrees without necessarily having to complete additional GE patterns.

Cons:

- Students would not have to complete the Living Skills requirements.
- The change would have major implications for IT, Degree Audit, and Financial Aid. The complexity involved would take collaboration and resources from these departments to establish new PeopleSoft configurations and business practices in order to minimize the impact on staff and students.

When considering indicating in the catalog which local GE courses are also approved for Cal-GETC, which is needed because the names and numbers used for the areas within those patterns are essentially identical, the workgroup considered the following.

Pros:

- Students using a local AA/AS degree to prepare to transfer would know which courses would also satisfy GE requirements at a transfer institution.

Cons:

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