

**Rhode Island College  
Committee on General Education**

**Annual Report**

**Prepared For: The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee**

**May 11, 2024**

**I. COGE AY 2023-24 Members**

K. Almeida (Natural Science), S. Basu (Chair – School of Business), B. Caouette (FYW), J. Capece (School of Social Work), S. Costa (Mathematics), J. Dagle (Associate Dean FAS), D. Gill (Adams Library), J. Harrison (Social and Behavioral Sciences), Q. Hughes (Dean, FAS), R. Kraus II (School of Social Work), Carolynn Masters (VPAA; designee – H. Shadoian), E. Miller (History), S. Oliveira (Modern Language), S. Picard (Visual and Performing Arts), R. Quintana Vallejo (Literature), S. Ross (School of Nursing), L. Schuster (FYS Coordinator).

**II. COGE AY 2023-24 Executive Committee**

S. Basu (Chair), Q. Hughes (Dean – FAS), S. Costa (Elected faculty member), E. Miller (Elected faculty member).

UCC charged COGE with creating a new executive committee in AY 2023-24 to screen proposals and consider various policy concerning the General Education program before discussion at full COGE. Elections were held for two faculty representatives from within committee membership in the opening September meeting of COGE leading to the executive committee membership listed above.

**III. Overview**

COGE took off to a slow start in the Fall 2023 semester but spent a busy second half working on and finally passing the General Education revision plan towards the end of the Spring 2024 semester.

**IV. COGE Schedule**

COGE Executive Committee met on the 1st Friday of every month, sometimes more in Spring 2024, depending on Gen Ed revision discussion needs.

Full COGE was scheduled to meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday and met in September, October, November, March, April and May.

COGE also hosted two open meetings in March 2024 to hear feedback on the Gen Ed proposal and a special meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup> to vote on the Gen Ed proposal.

## V. Program and Course Proposals

- The most significant development of the academic year was the passage of a revision to the General Education program on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2024 after several rounds of open discussion between Provost Masters and the faculty in Spring 2024. Two of these open meetings were hosted by COGE (*See Section VI below for details*).
- After passing at COGE, a formal UCC proposal to revise the Gen Ed program was prepared and submitted to the UCC in April. The proposal passed at UCC on April 19<sup>th</sup> and the RIC Council on May 10<sup>th</sup>. As part of the implementation plan of the revised Gen Ed, all current students will be moved to the revised Gen Ed unless it is detrimental for the student. Such cases will be reviewed on a case by case basis though most students can be moved to the new plan.
- COGE activities in Spring were affected by the following anticipated changes to the distribution categories. 1) Two distribution categories are being updated in the revised Gen Ed: Literature will now include Second Language in a merged Literature/Language category and History will now be part of a merged History/Philosophy category. There will be no Second Language requirement going forward. 2) AQSR will be replaced by an Elective category which will absorb all current AQSR courses and provide a place for new Gen Ed elective courses from across the campus that are open to all students as long as the course pre-requisites are met.
- In anticipation, the following courses were conditionally approved for inclusion into their respective categories from Fall 2024 as the Gen Ed proposal was moving through the UCC and RIC Council.
  - PHIL 100 and PHIL 206 for inclusion in the HIST/PHIL category
  - Modern Language courses in Italian, French, Portuguese, Spanish and American Sign Language at the 102 level and higher for inclusion in the Literature/Language category
  - Modern Language courses in Italian, French, Portuguese, Spanish and American Sign Language at the 101 level for inclusion in the Elective category.
  - ENGL 202 for inclusion into the Elective category.
- In addition, two new corequisite lecture and lab courses in BIOL 201 and BIOL 202 were approved as Natural Science courses. These courses will replace BIOL 108.
- Another set of corequisite lecture and lab courses in BIOL 203 and BIOL 204 were approved as AQSRs which will turn into Gen Ed Electives from Fall 2024.
- COGE also approved an online RN to BSN program proposed by the School of Nursing which was seeking waivers for the Second Language and Connections requirements.

## VI. Summary of the Revised General Education Plan

### ***Program Key Points***

Much of the existing General Education plan, including current Learning Outcomes, will remain the same until the process identified below results in the implementation of revised Learning Outcomes based upon the General Education Task Force's recommended learning outcome language. At that time, the new Learning Outcomes will be applied to the course categories by COGE with consultation from representatives of each category.

The following changes will be effective from Fall 24:

- General Education courses may now be either three or four credits, as long as 40 credits of General Education course work are completed. Students can take any additional courses from any category other than FYS and FYW to get to 40 credits.
- Students cannot count more than 2 courses from a course code for the Gen Ed program.

- RIC 100 is no longer a Gen Ed requirement but a college or graduation requirement. This change allows specific schools to augment the curriculum with content that is tailored to the needs of their graduates.
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Access are central concepts to RIC students and as such will be central to the Gen Ed program at RIC. This emphasis will be addressed in all revised Learning Outcomes through the development of individual student learning objectives directed to these concepts.
- The HIST category will now become HIST/PHIL and include Philosophy courses. This provides Philosophy a more visible place in the Gen Ed program and students the opportunity to more explicitly consider larger philosophical and ethical questions that are critical for shaping personal and social responsibility.
- The LIT category will now become LIT/LANG and relevant Modern Language courses at the 102 level and higher will be eligible for inclusion. Modern Language courses at the 101 level will be eligible for inclusion in the new Elective category.
- The second language requirement will cease to exist; instead, students can choose one course from the merged LIT/LANG category to fulfill that distribution requirement that still allows them to gain knowledge of human cultures through literature and language.
- The lab requirement for the Natural Science category will become optional.
- The Math category will begin to be treated as part of First Year Experience by suggesting students take this category in their first year, reflecting the value and significance of mathematics in many RIC majors and programs. The Math Department will work with departments across the college to develop courses to reflect this new first year model.
- The AQSR category will cease to exist, replaced by a new Elective category.
- The Elective category will allow students to take any additional course approved as a Gen Ed course except for FYS or FYW, as well as any course from a list of COGE-approved General Education courses that may not fit into a Distribution category.
- Elective courses must be open to students from all majors provided pre-requisites (if any) are met.
- Elective courses outside of a distribution category must meet at least one and no more than three of the existing Gen Ed Learning Outcomes.
- All current AQSR courses will remain in the Elective category.
- Connections as a signature RIC Gen Ed category remains in place for now, however,
  - The 45-credit required prerequisite will be removed, leaving the completion of FYS and FYW in place\*.
  - Connections courses will now be able to be counted in a major or minor.
- Only FT faculty will continue to teach FYS and Connections courses while both PT and FT will teach courses in remaining categories of the General Education Program.

*\* Note: Students completing General Education Honors can also take Honors level Connections courses after completing Honors FYS and Honors FYW.*

### **Program Implementation**

The following implementation plan will continue during AY 2024-25.

- All students will be transitioned to the revised Gen Ed program in Fall 2024, unless the new program disadvantages them, in which case they may choose to follow the pre-Fall 2024 program.

- All courses currently in the categories will remain in the program as approved courses in the category; however, if the Learning Outcomes are changed or updated through the process below, all courses currently addressing the related Learning Outcomes will need to be re-approved.
- Beginning in Spring 2024, COGE will seek interested faculty volunteers from across the College to participate in the following committees.
  - There will be a committee of interested “expert” faculty for each of the nine Learning Outcome proposed by the Gen Ed Task Force. Each Learning Outcome committee will be tasked with creating student learning objectives for each Outcome, and an assessment plan for each Outcome. The Learning Outcomes, student learning objectives, and assessment plans must be approved by COGE before implementation. When the new Learning Outcomes are implemented, all courses addressing them must be re-approved to meet the revised Outcomes.
  - There will also be a committee to explore the potential changes to update RIC’s signature General Education course, currently Connections. This committee will explore the pros and cons of this move and if they propose a new model, will identify criteria for courses in that category. Their report will be presented to the faculty for their consideration and approval.
- Apart from this current process, any addition or removal of learning outcomes to the general education program, including the switch from current Learning Outcomes to the proposed Outcomes, or any changes to the mapping of learning outcomes to categories, would require COGE approval.

**VII. Other COGE Business**

- COGE adopted a new policy of requiring sample syllabi with new course proposals where faculty are requested to provide some detail on how the relevant Gen Ed learning outcomes will be taught and assessed.
- COGE also discussed ways to update and digitize the Gen ed Distribution form. A Qualtrics based electronic prototype is ready and will be used in AY 2024-25.
- COGE also discussed ways to clean and organize the COGE website and make it user friendly. Suggestions included updating COGE forms, posting examples of past successful proposals, COGE announcements, and a place for new COGE proposals.

Respectfully submitted by

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