



Academic Senate

22/AS/19/UEPC

General Education (GE) Program Assessment Plan

RESOLVED: That the California State University Stanislaus Academic Senate recommend the attached General Education Program Assessment Plan; and be it further,

RESOLVED: That an initial review of the implementation and outcomes of this plan shall occur beginning in Fall 2021 following normal governance processes.

RATIONALE: 17/AS/14/UEPC, Resolution to Adopt General Education Goals and Outcomes, approved by the Academic Senate and the President, revised the goals and outcomes for General Education at Stanislaus in response to the February 2015 version of Executive Order 1100. The revisions necessitated a review of criteria that determine whether a course qualifies for certification or recertification as a GE course. The GE Assessment Council (GEAC) was formed to help shape the GE Academic Program Review and the GE Assessment Plan based on the new goals. GEAC members met with 23 academic departments in spring 2017 to discuss alignment of GE course learning outcomes and to receive feedback on a preliminary alignment. Based on that and further consultation with governance committees and departments, each GE Area is aligned with core anchor outcomes found in common across area courses. 17/AS/17/UEPC, General Education (GE) Area and Outcome Alignment, aligned the approved goals and outcomes with the various areas of GE to enable certification, recertification, and modification of general education courses, and was revised in Spring 2019 to reflect changes in our GE program to comply with EO 1100.

The document “Academic Program Review 2007/08 General Education,” included a draft assessment plan that was subsequently refined but then deferred pending the goal and outcome revision and alignment described in the previous paragraph. GEAC continued work on the draft plan in concert with the General Education Subcommittee of the UEPC, the UEPC, and the Faculty Director of GE as directed by the Provost and the Senate Executive Committee.

Comparisons have been made likening the GE assessment processes to other campus assessment processes (i.e., University Writing Committee). There have also been suggestions to adopt an existing model (i.e., Graduate Assessment Plan) for General Education. The following rationale attempts to clarify the distinctions and indicate the need for a General Education Assessment Plan that addresses the interdisciplinary and institutional nature of the program. Specific concerns raised regarding participation, review of artifacts, and reporting/use of findings are also addressed.



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Area vs. Course Assessment

As indicated in the proposed The General Education Assessment Plan (GEAP, pronounced Jeep), assessment of the GE program will be conducted routinely at the GE Area level. The proposed assessment plan outlines a process for achieving GE Area assessment through the collection of artifacts collected based on the approved GE Learning Goals and Outcomes Alignment (alignment approved 03/08/19).

Unlike assessment in the University Writing Committee, where the collection of student artifacts is used to assess *courses and course delivery* in the curriculum, the proposed GE assessment process will collect student artifacts from GE Area course sections in an effort to assess *student achievement* in the specified *GE Area*. For the GE Area artifact evaluation, all identifying information will be removed from the student artifacts. While the raters (see GEAP assessment process – p.6-7) may be able to make some assumptions about the origins of a specific artifact, all GE Area reporting will be done in the aggregate and in line with the University's *Principles of Assessment of Student Learning* – a point emphasized throughout the proposed GE Assessment Plan. The intentional inclusion of Principles 07 (evaluation of individual faculty) and 8 (comparison across programs) of the *Principles of Assessment of Student Learning* in the revised GE Assessment Plan addresses concerns raised at the initial review of GE Assessment Plan by Academic Senate regarding the potential impact on individual faculty or programs.

General Education as a Distinct Program

The nature of the General Education Program necessitates a process that differs from assessment of Graduate Education.

As Figure 1 referenced in the Plan indicates (see expanded description below), GE course learning outcomes are aligned with GE program Goals and Outcomes. This differs from the Graduate Assessment Plan that aligns program learning outcomes (already assessed through the Academic Program Review process) with institutional-level Graduate Education Learning Goals.

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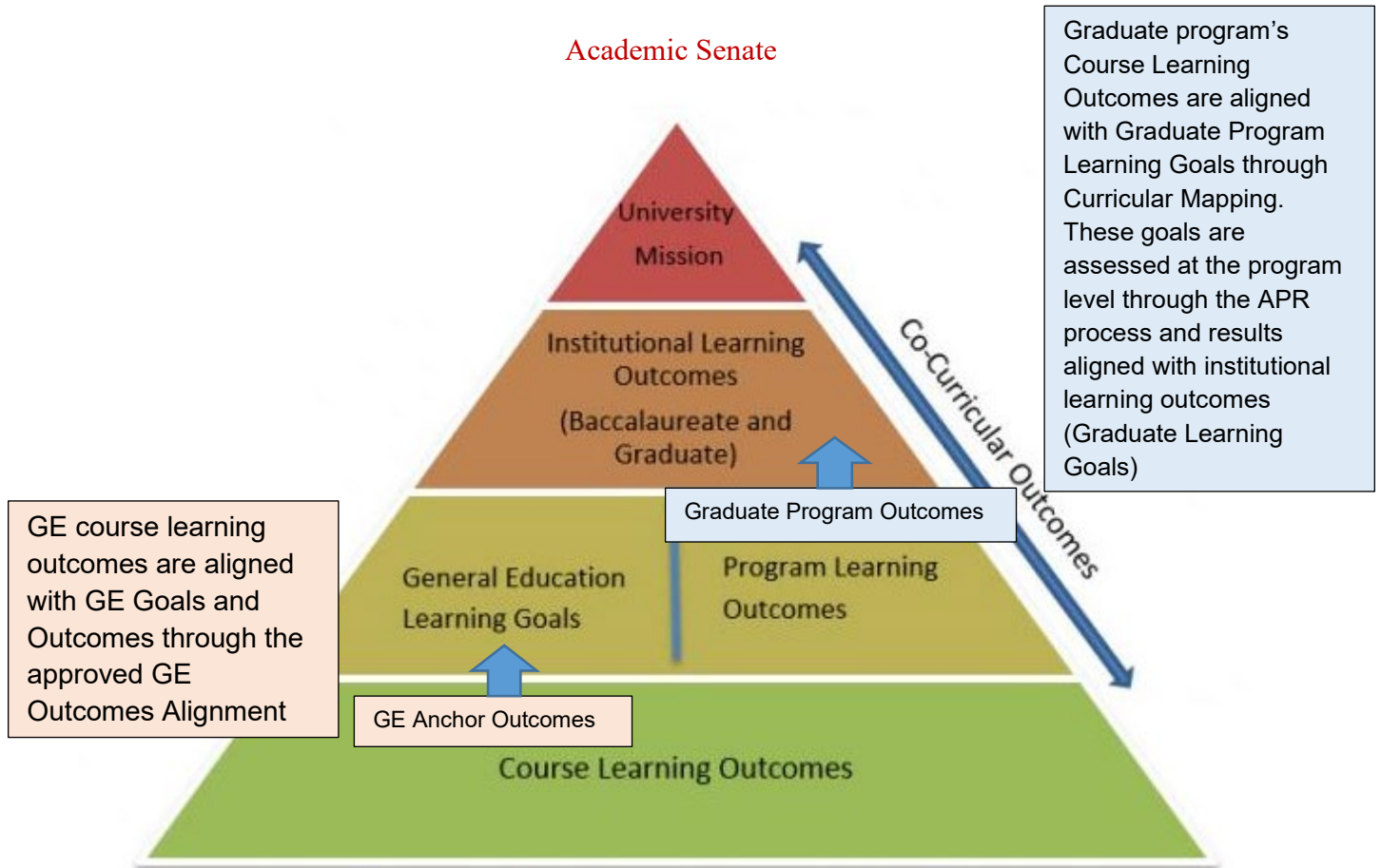


Fig. 1. Relationship of Course Learning Outcomes through the University Mission

GE is an institutional program with CLOs mapped to PLOs through an institutional level process (approved GE Outcomes Alignment). As no single program is responsible for a GE Area (an argument could be made for specific program-level responsibility for some GE sub-areas, however) nor is any program generally exclusively teaching their own majors in the majority of GE courses, no program is positioned to assess the General Education program – which differs from the model established in the GAP. It is certainly possible, though not typical, that the GE anchor outcomes align with academic program learning outcomes, but the purpose of the assessment differs (major assessment vs. GE assessment). To assess General Education as a program composed of an array of interdisciplinary courses requires a distinct alignment and assessment process. Figure 2 displays this alignment using a different orientation.

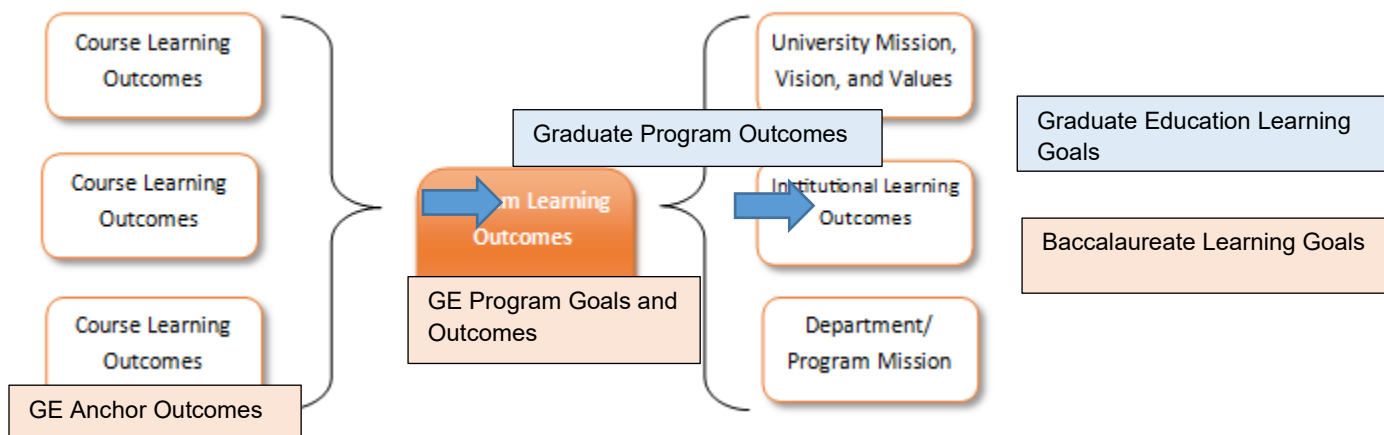


Fig. 2. Relationship of Course, Program, and Institutional Learning Goals

As General Education is a distinct program, it follows the seven-year Academic Program Review process. In each of the seven years, an assessment of a single Area of GE occurs, with the seventh year as a summary year to review and summarize the previous Area reviews and make recommendations. This process, and the direct assessment of student learning by Area, aligns with the requirements outlined in the APR Self-Study criteria and is not peer review of any course or faculty member.

Participation/Workload

A paragraph was added to the GE Assessment Plan (p.8) to address concerns regarding participation and workload. Specifically, there is mention that the Department Chair may request substitutions of faculty – noting that “Deans and Chairs are ultimately responsible for the provision of artifacts.” A note about workload (across the board – faculty, Chairs, Deans, FFA, FDGE) was also included to “ensure that random selection of sections does not result in undue burden on an individual faculty member in a particular GE Area.”

The GE program is a vital program to every Stan State student, and is thereby the responsibility of the institutional faculty to organize and support the assessment of this fundamental part of each undergraduate’s education. The proposed GEAP provides for the assessment of this vital program in a comprehensive way, balancing faculty workload with that of established institutional structure (e.g. the Faculty Fellow for Assessment (FFA) and Faculty Director of General Education (FDGE)) to accomplish a reasonable assessment and reporting process.



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Review of Artifacts – Criteria

As indicated in the revised GE Assessment Plan and GE Outcomes Assessment Process (p.5-6), GE Area student artifacts will be evaluated using the AAC&U VALUE rubrics, Title 5, and EO 1100 criteria. This revision represents a response to feedback and concerns regarding the use of definitions and criteria developed by the Core Competency Faculty Learning Communities. The AAC&U LEAP (Liberal Education & America's Promise) essential outcomes were utilized in the development of the GE Goals and Outcomes (in line with previous Executive Orders).

Reporting and Use of Findings

As indicated above (Area vs. Course Assessment), reporting will be completed in the aggregate with a focus on GE program improvement. A description of campus distribution and example of what this reporting could potentially look like are included on page 12 of the GE Assessment Plan. All GE Area reports will be shared with GE Area faculty as well as faculty governance (e.g., GE subcommittee and UEPC) and key administrative units (e.g., Office of Assessment and Office of General Education) to be utilized in efforts toward GE program improvement. Findings can then be used by programs and faculty to improve student learning and teaching effectiveness. A description of GE leadership and governance and committee/individual roles and responsibilities for reviewing and recommending action regarding GE program improvement is included on page 8 of the GE Assessment Plan.

Continual Review

As with all assessment, this plan will continue to be reviewed and may be revised based on feedback and experience during implementation. Modifications to the GE Assessment process and timeline will be approved through faculty governance, namely, Assessment of Student Learning subcommittee, GE subcommittee and UEPC. Substantive changes to the GE Assessment Plan would be reviewed by UEPC to determine need for Academic Senate review.

Approved by the Academic Senate on 05/07/19

Approved by President Junn on 05/24/19