

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

GE-005-189

General Education Area C Requirements

General Education Committee

Date: 02/13/2019

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 02/20/2019

Academic Senate

Date: 02/27/2018
First Reading

TITLE OF REFERRAL: General Education Area C Requirement**BACKGROUND:**

EO 1100-R specifies that the standard requirement for General Education Area C: Arts and Humanities include 12 semester units with 3 units taken at the upper division level (synthesis course). As for the 9 lower division units, EO 1100 states: At least one course completed in each of the following subareas:

C1 Arts: Arts, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theater

C2 Humanities: Literature, Philosophy, Languages other than English

Current Cal Poly Pomona's interpretation of area C: Arts and Humanities is as follows:

C1: Visual and Performing Arts (3 semester units)

C2a: Philosophy and Civilization (3 semester units)

C2b: Literature and Modern Languages (3 semester units)

Cal Poly Pomona's interpretation may apply only to entering freshmen. Transfer students may come having fulfilled Area C according to EO 1100-R resulting in disparate requirements for native students and transfer students. To assure equal requirements for all Cal Poly Pomona students, this referral is to bring the Campus's Area C requirement into line with that specified by EO 1100-R and that to fulfill Area C requirements a student should:

Take one course from Area C1 (3 units); one course from area C2 (3 units); and one course from either C1 or C2 (3 units)

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Office of Academic Programs

Liliane Fucaloro; Kristen Conway-Gomez, Dale Turner

DISCUSSION:

This issue has come earlier while the GE Committee was formulating the Cal Poly Pomona document on GE Area Distribution preparing for Semester conversion. The GE Committee felt we were in compliance with EO 1100 and previous Executive Orders pertaining to GE with the same interpretation. The GE Committee communicated their position to the Senate Executive Committee, the Provost, and the President. It seems that regardless of principled and well-argued positions, we had hit a brick wall. Therefore, in our effort to resolve this impasse, the General Education Committee, recognizes the authority of the Chancellor's Office to determine General Education policy for the California State University system. Therefore, we accept the interpretation of EO 1100-Revised by the Chancellor's office concerning GE Area C.

However, we accept this interpretation under protest, and raise the following concerns:

1. The Chancellor's Office interpretation of Area C undercuts the protections for campus autonomy built into EO 1100-Revised. The EO protects each campus's right to configure the GE program in several ways. Article 6.2.1 states that "campus faculty have primary responsibility for developing and revising the institution's particular GE program. Within the CSU GE distribution framework, each CSU campus is to exercise creativity in identifying courses, disciplines, and learning outcomes." This freedom includes the development of GE SLOs, and article 3.3 unambiguously states that it is the campus's responsibility to define them within the structure provided by the LEAP initiative. In other words, within general guidelines, campuses define the basic goals and outcomes of their GE programs in ways that are appropriate to each campus's situation. In area C specifically, the language in the EO leaves it up to each campus to define how the nine LD units should be apportioned, with at least one course each in arts and humanities: "For Area C, 9 semester units (or the quarter equivalent) with at least one course in the arts and one in the humanities." This language does not stipulate what should be done with the additional course.
2. The Chancellor's Office interpretation of Area C undercuts the uniqueness and specificity of this campus vis-à-vis other CSU's. To continue offering strong programs with a unique branding, we need to maintain the ability to configure our academic programs in a way that best meets the needs of our students.
3. The Chancellor's Office interpretation of Area C contradicts decades of precedents in the interpretation of EO's governing GE programs. Since at least the early 1990's (beginning with EO 595) the structure enunciated in the CO documents has remained the same. We have always been deemed in compliance until now, and it is not clear what motivates this arbitrary change.
4. The Chancellor's Office interpretation of Area C will not adequately prepare students for Upper Division synthesis courses already on the books in Sub-Area C3 (previously Sub-Area C4). Students who focus narrowly in their Lower Division coursework in Area C would not be adequately prepared to synthesize multiple humanities and arts disciplines in these courses.
5. By collapsing all humanities into a single GE Sub-Area C2 the Chancellor's Office interpretation of Area C dilutes the role of the humanities in an undergraduate education. This disadvantages students, who will need the skills characteristic of the humanities disciplines (argument, analysis, persuasion, broad vision of human culture, ethics) to rise to positions of decision making and leadership in their careers.
6. On a related point, by allowing students to choose a third class from either the arts or the humanities, the Chancellor's Office interpretation of Area C collapses two very distinct groupings of disciplines and does not respect disciplinary specificity. Arts disciplines and humanities disciplines represent different epistemological approaches (ways of knowing) and different histories, each with its own methods and procedures. They are not interchangeable.

7. Finally, as the Division of Academic Affairs prepares to finalize and implement the new Academic Master Plan and the definition of our polytechnic identity, it is worth noting that the Chancellor's Office interpretation of Area C runs counter to important elements of that identity. Particularly, it undercuts "diverse & multi-disciplinary perspectives". To the extent that it weakens the humanities, it also weakens training and reinforcement in "critical thinking & problem solving".

RECOMMENDATION:

Having stated our objections, we accept, under protest, the following alterations to our GE policy: we will remove any sub classification of GE Sub-Area C2, which will now contain all courses covering the disciplines of Literature, Language, Philosophy and Civilization. We also accept that, in accordance with the Chancellor's Office interpretation EO 1100-Revised, native students will be required to take 12 units:

- 3 units from a course in Sub-Area C1 (Visual and Performing Arts),
- 3 units from a course in Sub-Area C2 (Literature, Modern Languages, Philosophy and Civilization),
- 3 additional units from either C1 or C2
- 3 units Upper division synthesis course in Sub-Area C3.

We therefore, under protest, and with the above reservations, recommend that the Academic Senate approval of GE-005-189, making the required changes to Area C in our GE policy.