

## Executive Summary

This committee was charged with identifying the Expected Learning Outcomes and structure of the two, one-credit courses that comprise the “Bookends” of the GE. These Bookends are a required by the approved GE structure and are expected to be discipline-blind and consistent across colleges and majors.

The majority of feedback we received addressed foundational aspects of the Bookends that the committee viewed as unchangeable within their charge. Many of the concerns revolved around the overlap between the first Bookend and college-specific Survey courses. The committee recognizes this as an issue and endeavored to make these as distinct as possible in their focus and scope. To that end, we have eliminated “What is the university?” as one of the focal points within the first bookend, as that point is well emphasized in Survey. The committee recommends that the development of specific content within the Bookends involve close collaboration with colleges and with University Exploration to minimize overlap between the Bookends and Survey. Although changing the credit hours or nature of the first Bookend is outside of the charge of this committee, the proposed governance structure for the GE will allow for this, should the Bookends fail to perform the role envisioned for them.

The ELOs and Program Goals have been eliminated from this Final Report. Please refer to the final report of the ELO subcommittee and the full Implementation Report for the category ELOs and the Program goals.

Other issues raised in review emphasized the need to plan for students who transfer, are enrolled in online-only programs, or who seek Associate’s rather than Bachelor’s degrees. These issues are important. We address these issue in brief, provide some recommendations for how these situations could be navigated, and encourage these issues to be the focus of a working group that involves faculty and advisors in Summer 2020.

Finally, staffing of these courses remains a critical, open question. Because of their budgetary and HR implications, decisions about staffing lie outside of the scope of this committee. The committee strongly recommends that the Bookends be staffed by full time staff on multi-year contracts, and that these staff be supported through training and professional development as part of their job. The committee sees value in having some number of year-long graduate student assistantships as part of the staffing plan for the Bookends. The committee recommends that faculty offering presentations as part of the Faculty Threads of the first Bookend receive supplemental compensation tied to the number of Thread presentations they commit to and schedule, and that the compensation be scalable so that faculty to can commit to offering their Thread presentation e.g., 3, 6, or 9 times within a term.

## Overview of the Bookends

The GE Bookends comprise two, 1-credit courses: a Launch seminar and a Reflection seminar. The Launch seminar provides a strong introduction for the broad goals of the General Education program, introduces key skills, and supports sustained growth in terms of attaining program goals. The Reflection seminar provides opportunities for students to document and reflect on their academic and personal growth and allows for program-level assessment through structured evaluation of learning artifacts and students' responses to embedded questions within the ePortfolio.

## Proposed Goals and Outcomes of the Launch Seminar

The Launch seminar will introduce the General Education program and connect it to students' academic goals and to experiences in GE courses taken already through AP, CC+, or at other institutions. Students will explore disciplinary lenses and their academic and personal goals as they tackle three key questions: "Who have I been?" "What is the world?" and "Who do I want to become?" Students will discern and communicate their understanding of these questions; thoughtfully identify, select, and use information to identify and solve problems and identify, expand, and connect ideas to multiple audiences.

The Launch seminar will use a combination of presentation modules, assignments, and discussions to advance the following goals:

- (1) Students will articulate their academic identity and motivations, and identify opportunities to explore and express these goals
- (2) Students will be exposed to disciplinary and personal perspectives and explain how these contribute to understanding and solving problems
- (3) Students will describe and discuss the institutions and cultural traditions of the U.S. and other nations
- (4) Students will investigate a problem and communicate their intellectual and emotional reaction to it.
- (5) Students will exercise curiosity, imagination, adaptability, and intentionality

The Launch seminar will consist of a hybrid delivery course with ~10 hours of standard, shared content and four hour-long sessions led by faculty ("Faculty Threads") that are chosen by the students and that will vary from term to term. The focus of activities and discussions within the Launch seminar will be content presented through online modules and in the Faculty Threads. ELOs for Goals 1-4 are presented in the ELO subcommittee report. Goal 5 will guide the development of content and rubrics in service of the other four goals.

Enrollment targets for each offering of the Launch seminar is 25 students. This number will enable conversation and interaction within the online learning space and supports the greatest flexibility and opportunity in room scheduling for in-person meetings.

## Proposed Goals and Outcomes of the Reflection Seminar

The Reflection seminar is an online course and ePortfolio that aims to distill and extend the student experience with various academic disciplines and to facilitate their integration of their academic,

professional, and co-curricular experiences. The Reflection seminar provides opportunities for students to document and reflect on their academic and personal growth and allows for program-level assessment through structured evaluation of learning artifacts and students' responses to embedded questions within the ePortfolio.

The Reflection seminar will focus on connecting students' academic experience, and career goals, encouraging them to see these as part of a larger context. They will consider and critically evaluate the work and experience of their GE through their ePortfolio and engage with facilitated online modules that encourage the students to see themselves and their interests in a global context, to assess their understanding and awareness of this context, and to recognize their opportunities to contribute to and shape this larger world. The new content will provide opportunities for students to describe and apply skills needed to maintain resiliency and personal well-being in contemporary society and plan for personal and professional engagement. In their discussions about their work and in the new work completed within the Reflection seminar, students will analyze the roles and impacts of human activity on their world, and practice the knowledge, skills, attitudes and qualities of an interculturally competent global citizen who can respond appropriately and competently in a range of contexts and across human differences.

The Reflection seminar will use a combination of presentation modules, assignments, and discussions to advance the following goals:

- (1) Students will articulate their academic identity and motivations
- (2) Students will describe disciplinary and personal perspectives and explain how these contribute to understanding and solving problems
- (3) Students will explore issues of global interdependence and intercultural competence.
- (4) Students will investigate a problem and communicate their intellectual and emotional reaction to it.
- (5) Students will describe and discuss intersections of human and natural systems
- (6) Students will exercise curiosity, imagination, adaptability, and intentionality

The Reflection seminar will be a facilitated online course that has ~8 hours of content. In addition to engaging with material introduced and developed within the Reflection seminar itself, students will interact with their ePortfolio to respond to prompts about their coursework in other GE courses (expected to encompass ~6 hours). Goal 6 will guide the development of content and rubrics in service of the other five goals.

### **Logistics, Format, and Structure of the Bookends**

The Bookends seminars will each be S/U and are required for graduation for students seeking Bachelor's degrees. The Bookends seminars will be administered by OAA via the Office of Undergraduate Education, with content developed by faculty, with support from an instructional design team from the Office of Distance Education and eLearning. Reflection prompts for GE artifacts will relate to the assignments and experiences within the GE and to the program, and will be developed by faculty, with support from an instructional design team from the Office of Distance Education and eLearning.

The Launch seminar is expected of all Bachelor's-degree seeking students on all campuses. Enrollment in sections of the Launch seminar will be campus specific but not college specific. Fully online sections will be available for students in online programs.

The Reflection seminar is expected of all Bachelor's-degree seeking students on all campuses. Programs that require an ePortfolio or similar capstone as part of their major or program can use the same ePortfolio space for both the GE and major portfolio. Customization and coordination of portfolio requirements will be encouraged to minimize duplication of effort.

Regional campuses may elect to have a different balance of online versus in-person sessions for the Launch seminar, but will use the same content and materials. Abbreviated (0.5 credit) versions of the Launch seminar will be developed for students who transfer at Rank 3 or above.

Alternative formats for the Launch Seminar, including more heavily in-person offerings or offering that blend the Launch content with e.g., a Freshman-seminar (in lieu of Faculty Threads) are possible, but must address the Bookend ELOs and must be open to students from all colleges. Proposals to modify the Launch Seminar structure should be reviewed by ULAC-GE.

The Bookends are not a required part of the GE for students seeking Associate's degrees.

A call for participation in the Faculty Threads will be issued annually in Spring to cover Autumn, Spring, and Summer terms of the next academic year. All faculty on all campuses will be eligible to offer Threads, including faculty in colleges that do not offer undergraduate degrees. Faculty proposals for Threads will include a brief discussion of the focus and will identify a pre-meeting activity and an assessment activity (with rubric). Faculty will be compensated at a rate reflecting the number of times the Thread is offered.

Students will initiate their ePortfolio when they enroll in the Launch seminar. Students will upload materials from the Launch seminar and document experience with GE coursework they may have already completed as a way to learn to use the ePortfolio.

GE Themes courses and courses having "Embedded Literacies" will be required during the submission and approval process to identify assignments that can be uploaded to the ePortfolio as part of their course submission process. Students will be advised to upload these during their Themes or Embedded Literacies courses.

The Launch seminar must be completed within the first three regular terms of enrollment (excluding summer). Students will be advised during orientation (and again in Survey) to enroll in the Launch Seminar in their second term, as to allow for greater alignment with Survey and other 1st semester program requirements. Students will be reminded to complete the Reflection seminar starting in the second term of their Junior year (6<sup>th</sup> semester) or when they complete their GE program, if earlier. Registration holds will be used to require registration in the Reflection seminar by the final term of Senior year, if students have not enrolled or completed it by then.

Although it is desirable that students receive ongoing feedback on their Reflection seminar, because the Reflection seminar is a course, the mechanism for doing this is not clear-cut. Discussion with programs

that require Capstone portfolios will help identify best practices that will support continuous learning and growth but not require students to produce work outside of the term in which they formally enroll in the Reflection seminar.

Bookend seminars will be staffed by instructors on multi-year, full time contracts or by GTAs. Staff will receive training and support through a Bookends program coordinator.