Sierra College
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE   AP 4025

Philosophy and Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education

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References:	ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A; Title 5 Sections 55061, 55805 & 55063

The programs of the District are consistent with the institutional mission, purposes, demographics and economics of its community.

The associate degree symbolizes a successful attempt to lead students through patterns of learning experiences designed to develop certain capabilities and insight, including:

- the ability to think and communicate clearly and effectively, orally and by writing;
- use mathematics;
- understand the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines;
- be aware of other cultures and times;
- achieve insights gained through experience in thinking about ethical problems;
- develop the capacity for self understanding.

In addition to these accomplishments, students shall possess sufficient depth in some field of knowledge to contribute to lifetime interest.

Criteria for Associate Degree
- Program is designed to be taught to lower division students for credit towards the degree, and/or for purposes of transfer, occupational preparation, or career upgrade.
- The program provides systematic instruction in a body of content or skills whose mastery forms the basis of the associate degree.
- The college has the resources to maintain the program at the level of quality described in the new program application.
- Other criteria as mandated by Title 5, Section 55063.

Philosophy for General Education
General Education at Sierra College is defined as a range of courses to help students become aware of cultural differences, to develop in them a sense of self esteem, to assist them in maintaining their health and fitness, and to enable them to achieve their goals and gain a breadth

of knowledge about the environment, the natural sciences, the social and behavioral sciences, the humanities, and the skills of communication and critical thinking. This gives students a basic understanding of the world they live in and capacity for self understanding.

General education introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. The general education program provides the opportunity for students to develop the intellectual skills, information technology facility, affective and creative capabilities, social attitudes, and appreciation for cultural diversity that will make them effective learners and citizens. General education is designed to introduce students to the variety of means through which people comprehend the modern world.

Criteria and Core Components of General Education Categories
These core components are based on Title 5, Education Code Regulations, Section 55806: Minimum Requirements for the associate degree and CSU Executive Order No. 595 outlining general education breadth requirements. It is preferred that courses satisfying the Sierra College associate degree requirements should also meet the CSU general education breadth requirements and IGETC Guidelines. If a course is not accepted or removed as a CSU general education course, the Curriculum Committee will review its local designation.

To qualify to satisfy general education, courses should be general in nature including an introduction to the broad topic rather than specific in nature on a narrow subject. In addition, students will demonstrate competence in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis/logical thinking.

Natural Sciences
Courses in the natural sciences are those which examine the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena. A course shall include:

- An appreciation and understanding of the scientific method
- The limitations of scientific endeavor, namely, what is evidence and how was it derived
- An understanding of the relationships between science and other human activities
- The influence which the acquisition of scientific knowledge has had on the development of the world's civilizations

Social/Behavioral Sciences
Courses in the social and behavioral sciences are those which focus on people as members of society. A course shall include:

- Development of an awareness of the method of inquiry used in social and behavioral sciences
- Critical thinking about the ways people act and have acted in response to their societies
- An appreciation of how societies and social subgroups operate
- Reflection on the fact that human social, political and economic institutions and behavior are inextricably interwoven
- An examination of their contemporary as well as historical setting
- Both Western and non-Western contexts

Humanities
Courses in the humanities are those which study the cultural activities and artistic expressions of human beings. As a result of the study, students should understand the interrelationship between the creative arts, the humanities and self. A course could include:

- Awareness of the ways in which people throughout the ages and in different cultures have responded to themselves and the world around them, both intellectually and affectively, in artistic and cultural creation
- Development of aesthetic understanding
- Ability to make value judgments
- Active participation in individual esthetic, creative experience
- Exposure to both Western cultures and non-Western cultures
- Foreign language courses must contain a cultural component and not be solely skills acquisition courses.

Language and Rationality
Courses in language and rationality are those which develop for the student the principles and applications of language toward logical thought, clear and precise expression and critical evaluation of communication in whatever symbol system the student uses.

- English Composition. Courses shall be designed to include both expository and argumentative writing.
- Communication and Analytical Thinking. Courses shall be designed to include oral communication, mathematics, logic, statistics, computer languages and programming, and related disciplines.

Health Education/Physical Education
Courses in health education/physical education are those which develop an appreciation for physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle.   Courses could include participation in aerobic and muscular fitness activities, nutrition and health analysis, or a combination of both.

Multicultural Studies
- Any course which explores in depth any non-Western/European culture, art, science, or history, or deals with the history or cultural contributions of any group experiencing past discrimination and/or under representation in American/Western society. Examples would be Literature by Women or Asian Humanities.
- Any course which is multi-cultural by definition: Anthropology, Comparative Religion, etc.
- Any course not included above which nevertheless incorporates a *demonstrable and central* multi-cultural component: that is, any course
  a. which explores cultural distinction, the impact of culture/history, and/or the nature of cultural interaction
     and
  b. which as a central element of the course engages in comparative and/or intensive analysis of different cultures and cultural products or paradigms.

Learning Skills
In Title 5, Section 55806, to receive an associate degree, in addition to completing the general education components, students must demonstrate competence in
- Reading
- Written expression
- Mathematics

At Sierra College, we have added an additional component of oral communications.

Institutional Outcomes
Sierra College is committed to serving the whole student as outlined in the Mission, Vision Statement and Core Values. To that end, the College strives to provide students at Sierra College with a variety of learning opportunities, both in and out of class. Based on their own educational goals and experiences, students will develop skills in the following areas. These Institutional Outcomes provide a context for assessing and improving student learning at the college, offering a means to consider the effectiveness of our programs and services. Students who have completed the general education sequence are competent in the institutional outcomes.

Communication
- Read – Use active reading skills to comprehend and interpret information and ideas from a variety of texts, including academic prose (such as textbooks, literature, primary and secondary sources, and scholarly journals), technical documentation (such as manuals, charts, graphs, and reports), and media sources (such as newspapers, magazines, websites and online databases).
- Write – Communicate thoughts, ideas, and information effectively in writing in a variety of modes and for a variety of purposes. Accurately and persuasively convey information and ideas using logic, reasoning, and effective rhetorical strategies. Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, style, and format.
- Listen – Demonstrate active listening skills in classroom, community, personal, and professional situations. Interpret and respond appropriately to verbal and nonverbal communication in a variety of contexts.
- Dialogue –Interact in a variety of dynamic situations by assessing the needs of the audience, creating a message, adapting to audience feedback, and responding appropriately. Through dialogue, build mutual understanding with individuals from various backgrounds.

Technology and Information Competency
- Demonstrate Technical Literacy – Efficiently and accurately use current computer and other relevant technologies to acquire, process, and present information. Organize and maintain records.
- Apply Technology – Use computer applications and other technologies in the learning process, real-world scenarios, and the workplace. Adapt to new or developing technologies.
- Access Information – Recognize the need for information; choose and narrow topic. Formulate search questions. Gather, organize, and discriminate among various sources of information.
- Evaluate and Examine Information — Filter information for relevance and accuracy. Apply criteria to determine credibility. Utilize data gathered to draw conclusions. Construct

meaning from expanding and conflicting information. Credit sources according to academic standards.

Critical and Creative Thinking
- Inquire – Identify and understand questions or problems across disciplines and in practical applications. Develop hypotheses.
- Analyze – Investigate and assess the validity or relevance of arguments, claims, or contentions supported by data, observation, experience, testing or analysis. Distinguish fact from opinion. Develop an interpretation with an awareness of different views and reasoning.
- Problem Solve – Use sound reasoning to specify solutions and consequences. Test hypotheses using methods appropriate to the problem (such as the scientific method, mathematical reasoning, and principles of logic).
- Express – Acquire an appreciation and involvement in the creation or performance of works of fine art, craft, music, drama, and/or culture. Participate in games, sports, dance, and outdoor pursuits based on individual interests and capabilities.

Citizenship
- Ethics – Develop and apply ethical reasoning and decision making skills in academics, in the workplace, and in global and local communities. Value honesty, civility, empathy, interpersonal competence, social responsibility, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- Diversity – Recognize, understand, and respect diversity of belief, culture, value, ability, gender, race, age, and sexual orientation.
- Sustainability/Global Awareness – Develop values and behaviors that respect the natural environment. Evaluate social justice issues and identify social responsibilities to elicit social change. Recognize the ethical implications of political, social, and economic institutions.
- Personal Responsibility – Accept personal responsibility by recognizing oneself as the principal cause for opportunities and experiences.   Effectively develop, apply and manage a healthy physical lifestyle and emotional well-being; Self-motivate through planning and acting to accomplish goals. Recognize the value of life-long learning.

See Board Policies 1200, 2900, and 4025.