

Rio Salado College

General Education Program Review Review Period: Academic Years 2011-2016 Review Conducted: AY2016-17

I. Degrees and Certificates in the General Education Program

The General Education Program at Rio Salado College is comprised of numerous courses under various disciplines and housed in twelve different departments. The College's General Education Departments include: Biology; Communications; Counseling; English; Humanities and History; Languages; Library Science; Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Psychology, Philosophy and Religious Studies; Reading; and Social Sciences. For the purposes of this Program Review, 19 courses were selected as the snapshot of the College's General Education Program. The courses were selected because they incorporate college-level assessment work and/or they are courses with significant enrollment. The chosen general education courses are displayed in Table 1. The General Education Program Review was conducted during the spring 2017 term for academic years 2011-16.

Table 1: Selected General Education courses used as a snapshot of Rio Salado College's General Education Program.			
Department	Course(s)		
Biology	BIO105 <i>Environmental Biology</i>	BIO205 <i>Microbiology</i>	
Communications	COM100 <i>Introduction to Human Communication</i>		
Counseling	CPD150 <i>Strategies for College Success</i>		
English	ENG101 <i>First Year Composition</i>	ENG102 <i>First Year Composition</i>	
Humanities and History	HIS103 <i>United States History to 1865</i>	HIS104 <i>United States History 1865 to Present</i>	HUM201 <i>Humanities: Universal Themes</i>
Languages	SPA202 <i>Intermediate Spanish II</i>	SPH245 <i>Hispanic History in the Southwest</i>	

Library Science	IFS201 <i>Research in the Digital Age</i>		
Mathematics	MAT142 <i>College Mathematics</i>		
Physical Sciences	CHM130 <i>Fundamental Chemistry</i>		
Psychology, Philosophy, and Religious Studies	PSY101 <i>Introduction to Psychology</i>		
Reading	CRE101 <i>College Critical Reading</i>		
Social Sciences	ECN211 <i>Macroeconomic Principles</i>	GPH111 <i>Introduction to Physical Geography</i>	SOC101 <i>Introduction to Sociology</i>

II. General Education Program Purpose and Mission

Alignment with MCCCD Mission Documents

The General Education Program at Rio Salado College is aligned with the mission and purposes of the Maricopa County Community College District General Education Curriculum:

The general education core of the program of study for an associate degree or a certificate helps students develop a greater understanding of themselves, of their relationship with others, and of the richly diverse world in which they live. The general education experience provides students with opportunities to explore broad areas of commonly held knowledge and prepares them to contribute to society through personal, social, and professional interactions with others. General education fosters students' personal development by opening them to new directions, perspectives, and processes. Through its general education requirements, the Maricopa County Community College District is committed to helping students develop qualities and skills that will serve them throughout their lives. General education opportunities encourage students to:

- Build self-awareness, self-respect, and self-confidence
- Recognize and respect the beliefs, traditions, abilities, and customs of all people and all cultures
- Consider the local, global, and environmental impacts of personal, professional, and social decisions and actions
- Access, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, and use information wisely
- Communicate effectively personally, socially, and professionally

- Think critically, make informed decisions, solve problems, and implement decisions
- Consider the ethical implications of their choices
- Value the learning process throughout their lives
- Integrate and connect ideas and events in a historical perspective, and see relationships among the past, the present, and the future
- Develop a personal sense of aesthetics
- Use technological resources appropriately and productively
- Work cooperatively and respectfully with others to serve their communities

The general education experience at Maricopa County Community College District is composed of specific elements across the curriculum designed to provide the learner with essential knowledge and skills:

- Communication
- Arts and Humanities
- Numeracy
- Scientific Inquiry in the Natural and Social Sciences
- Information Literacy
- Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking
- Cultural Diversity

Alignment with College Mission Documents

The Rio Salado Vision: *We reinvent the learning experience to change lives*, underpins the General Education Program.

The College Mission commits to transforming learning through the following priorities:

- Active community engagement and organizational responsiveness
- Customized, high-quality courses and programs
- Data analytics and institutional accountability
- Flexibility, affordability and innovation
- Personalized service and a commitment to student success

Courses for university transfer, online learning, and early college initiatives are all primary area of focus through our mission documents, and are reflected in components of the program and the modalities in which it is offered at Rio.

Notably, the College mission commits to customized, high-quality courses and programs, and this commitment is fundamental to the General Education Program. Further, commitment to data analytics will be evident throughout this Program Review.

XI. Program Best Practices, Action Plans, and Recommendations

a. Program Best Practices

Institutional Research worked with the Gen Ed Learning Outcomes Coordinators to link individual assignment dimensions with our college-level learning outcomes and build the Assessment Data Display. Using this tool, Faculty Chairs can drill down to identify lesson, course, and program components that need attention. The Chair works with the corresponding Learning Outcome Coordinator to devise content and/or assessment interventions designed to improve student learning, and a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle is initiated.

b. Action Plans

As indicated in Question 16, students enrolled in the 19 representative courses included in this Program Review performed at or above college level in all five college-wide student learning outcomes overall. However, at the course level, performance in some assignments did not meet this threshold. These data were shared with the individual Faculty Chairs for further action, as they deem appropriate.

As indicated in Question 21, data validation for the nascent Civitas initiative is underway. Once the data are available, they will be evaluated and next steps will be planned depending upon the results.

c. Recommendations

- Tailor General Education offerings under the Guided Pathways structure.
- Advocate for degrees in specific disciplines at the District level.
- Continue the focus on retention and persistence in order to keep upward momentum in successful course completion and program completers.
- Continue with current practices.