Lower-Division General Education for Students Transferring to the CSU

Transfer students have two ways to meet CSU lower-division general education requirements:

- **Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC).** Completion of coursework in this pattern will satisfy lower-division general education requirement for both UC and CSU. With limited exceptions, the entire pattern must be completed prior to transfer. Community colleges submit courses proposed for fulfillment of IGETC requirements, and UC and CSU representatives review the course outlines for consistency with IGETC standards. Only courses transferable to both UC and CSU will be considered. The student must complete each IGETC course with a minimum grade of C (C- is not allowed). Courses may not double count for IGETC and the CSU’s United States History, Constitution, and American Ideals requirement.

- **CSU General Education-Breadth.** This is the same framework on which CSU campuses have built their campus-specific general education requirements. It is exclusive to the CSU and is the pattern most commonly used by transfer students. In place since 1981, its structure is similar to that of IGETC, but it incorporates a wider range of courses. Since 1993, CSU representatives have reviewed the outlines of courses proposed for addition to the list of courses that are accepted as fulfilling GE-Breadth requirements. No minimum grade is specified, but Areas A (Communication in the English Language and Critical Thinking) and B4 (Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning) must be completed with a grade of C or better for admission as an upper-division transfer student. Nearly all CSU campuses will accept—for transfer students—double-counting of courses for GE-Breadth and United States History, Constitution, and American Ideals.

CSU General Education-Breadth requirements are currently governed by Executive Order 595. The executive order allows community colleges and other accredited two-year institutions to certify completion of lower-division GE-Breadth requirements, subject area by subject area or for all five subject areas (full certification). Similarly, community colleges can certify completion of IGETC. Students transferring with full GE-Breadth or IGETC certification cannot be held to additional lower-division general education coursework, and students transferring with subject-area GE-Breadth certification cannot be held to additional lower-division general education coursework in the areas certified.

Certification has been important because campus general education requirements, though based on the same GE-Breadth pattern, differ in many details from one CSU campus to another. Certification assures upper-division transfer students that their general education coursework will be honored, regardless of the CSU to which they eventually transfer.

Courses approved for certification are listed on the ASSIST website. A CCC campus staff member typically completes the certification process by hand on a separate document that accompanies the final transcript before a student transfers or via a computer-based program. It is rare that a CCC will certify before the final term of attendance.

Issues to Consider:

- IGETC or GE-Breadth certification is independent of the intended major. At some CSUs, campus general education requirements are markedly different for students in different majors.
- CCCs do not ordinarily know the student’s intended major when they prepare a certification.
- Certification is done without regard to CSU-campus-specific limitations on the double-counting of courses for general education and the major.
- The process of certification is labor-intensive for the CCCs.
- A student must request certification; it is not automatic.