



The State University
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway, Albany, New York 12246

SUNY Global Center, 116 E 55th St,
New York, NY 10022

www.suny.edu

MEMORANDUM

December 17, 2024

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. John B. King, Jr., Chancellor

SUBJECT: State University of New York General Education Policy

Action Requested

This resolution establishes an updated SUNY General Education Framework applicable to all students pursuing a SUNY undergraduate degree. It directs the Chancellor or designee to work with campus leadership and faculty to implement local general education and undergraduate degree program requirements that are consistent with the updated SUNY General Education Framework, effective fall 2026 for new students entering all associate and baccalaureate degree programs.

Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the mission of the State University of New York is to provide a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of all students, and to address local, regional, and state needs and goals; and

Whereas by Resolution 2021-48, adopted on November 9, 2021, the SUNY Board of Trustees expanded the SUNY General Education Framework for all associate and baccalaureate degree students; and

Whereas throughout the Chancellor's engagement with faculty and students, many stakeholders expressed the need for action regarding student learning about civic discourse, skills essential for participation in civic life and to secure the future health of our democracy; and

Whereas, through the System-wide collaborative work on the use and integration of artificial intelligence at SUNY, the Chancellor heard from faculty, administrators, and staff, the need for education and guidance on rapid growth of artificial intelligence and its impact on the teaching and learning process as an integral part of information literacy for today's learners; and

Whereas as announced by the Chancellor via the policy agenda that accompanied the State of the University Address in May 2024, and during the SUNY Board of Trustees meeting in June 2024, two updates to the SUNY General Education Framework were proposed to respond to this stakeholder feedback and better meet the needs of students in their academic career and beyond: the establishment of a new core competency in Civic Discourse, and revision of the existing Information Literacy core competency to explicitly identify artificial intelligence; and

Whereas in June 2024, the SUNY Provost convened a representative working group of leadership of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges and University Faculty Senate, campus chief academic officers, campus faculty and staff who are subject matter experts in civic discourse or artificial intelligence, and members of the SUNY Office of the Provost, to develop recommendations for a new core competency in Civic Discourse and a revised Information Literacy core competency that explicitly identifies artificial intelligence; and

Whereas in September 2024, the working group recommendations were distributed as a discussion draft for system-wide comment, and extensive feedback was received and then analyzed in consultation with the working group; and

Whereas in October 2024, following changes to reflect the above referenced stakeholder input, a revised discussion draft was distributed for a second system-wide comment period, and also shared with the SUNY Trustees for discussion and input; and again comments were considered and analyzed and are reflected in the final language described herein and in subsequent implementation guidance to be shared from the System Provost; and

Whereas while there is existing faculty expertise on many campuses and some campuses have already incorporated student learning about civic discourse and/or artificial intelligence in individual courses, programs, and schools, there is a need for further professional learning as well as curriculum development and approval to support full implementation of the updates to the SUNY General Education Framework; and

Whereas adjustments of campus general education programs are governed by local policies and procedures for curriculum development and approval, and implementation requires additional steps such as coding a new General Education Transcript Addendum (GETA) and updating college catalogues; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that as Charged by the SUNY Chancellor, the SUNY Provost be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to implement an updated SUNY General Education Framework, which amends Resolution 2021-48, adopted on November 9, 2021, and includes a new core competency of Civic Discourse and a revised core competency for Information Literacy that identifies artificial intelligence; and be it further

Resolved that the SUNY Provost distribute additional guidance and procedures for a two-phase implementation of the updated SUNY General Education Framework, beginning immediately with campus-level development and discretionary early adoption of student learning experiences on civic discourse and artificial intelligence; and, effective Fall 2026, system-wide implementation of the updated core competencies of the SUNY General Education Framework as a requirement for new students entering all associate and baccalaureate degree programs.

Background

On November 9, 2021, the SUNY Board of Trustees established the SUNY General Education Framework by adopting Resolution 2021-48. This Framework replaced the SUNY General Education Requirement that had been established in 1998 via Resolution 98-241 and amended in 2010 and 2012 via Resolutions 2010-006 and 2012-089, respectively.

The 30-credit SUNY General Education Framework adopted in 2021 is applicable to all students pursuing a SUNY undergraduate degree, and it includes the following knowledge and skills categories, the first four of which are required: Communication – written and oral; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice; Mathematics (and quantitative reasoning); and Natural Sciences (and scientific reasoning); Humanities; Social Sciences; the Arts; US History and Civic Engagement; World History and Global Awareness; and World Languages; as well as two required core competencies: Critical Thinking and Reasoning and Information Literacy.

Attachment A. Update to the SUNY General Education Framework Core Competencies

Attachment B. Provost's General Education Working Group

Attachment A: Update to the SUNY General Education Framework Core Competencies

Civic Discourse *(New)*

Students will demonstrate the discourse skills necessary to participate in civic life, including:

- the deliberation of ideas through reasoned inquiry that seeks new information and considers multiple viewpoints; and
- the ethical practice of advocacy, dissent, and dialogue that constructively attends to points of conflict.

Guidance

The phrase “participate in civic life” is intentionally broad to capture the ways in which individuals engage with various communities and public spaces, which may include political and social institutions within the United States and across the globe, as well as other spaces of public life, such as digital forums and the workplace. Conceived of in this manner, the skills of civic discourse are applicable across a range of disciplines.

Civic discourse is the exchange of ideas about public matters. It is distinct from debate, which has as a primary purpose promoting one’s own ideas and attempting to convince others to agree with these ideas.

This core competency is intended to focus on students acquiring the knowledge to understand the importance of, and requirements for, civic discourse, and students will demonstrate the skills that reflect this knowledge. This competency is not intended to assess student conduct in general.

Information Literacy *(Revised)*

Note: the red text represents additions/deletions to the existing language of this core competency

Students will

- locate information effectively using tools appropriate to their need and discipline;
- evaluate information **from a variety of sources**, with an awareness of authority, validity, **and bias, and origin**; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of information use, creation, and dissemination, **whether from traditional sources or emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence.**

Guidance

Students need to acquire information literacy appropriate to the demands of the 21st century ~~citizen, and campuses~~, which includes applying all three learning outcomes of this core competency to various sources of information, including emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

Attachment B: Provost's General Education Working Group

- Candice Vacin (Faculty Council of Community Colleges; Genesee Community College)
- Keith Landa (University Faculty Senate; SUNY Purchase)
- Babette Faehmel (Schenectady County Community College)*
- Angela Graves (Alfred State College)*
- Joseph Scanlon (Monroe Community College)*
- John Suarez (SUNY Cortland)*
- Billie Franchini (University at Albany)**
- Dana Gavin (Dutchess Community College)**
- Ann Bisantz (University at Buffalo)
- Suzan Harkness (SUNY Morrisville)
- Ann McClellan (SUNY Cortland)
- Vanessa Morest (Westchester Community College)
- David Cantaffa (System Administration)
- Eurie Dahn (System Administration)
- Rebecca Grace (System Administration)
- Deborah Moeckel (System Administration)

* SUNY Civic Education and Engagement and Civil Discourse Fellow

** SUNY Faculty Advisory Council on Teaching and Technology (FACT²)
Optimizing AI in Higher Education Task Group Lead Participant