



Call for GUR Link and FIG Cluster Proposals • Viking Landing!

Call for GUR Link Proposals

The Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) has endorsed piloting GUR links aimed at strengthening the first general education learning outcome around written, oral, and visual literacy and is issuing a call for proposals. Specifically, this competency expects students to analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms. A link refers to two GUR courses designed to complement each other, so students are dual-enrolled in the two courses within the same academic quarter.

An information meeting on the link concept will be held on Friday, Feb. 8 at 1 p.m. in Wilson Library 265.

Purpose

Students would enroll in a link with the goal of receiving integrated instruction in disciplinary content along with academic skills development. The link would also provide an opportunity to enhance the general education experience for students beyond the first-year and to provide more coherence across the GURs.

Example

A link might pair a Communication, Block C GUR writing course, such as Library 201 (“Introduction to Research Strategies”) with a 200 or 300-level GUR course in any discipline. As part of the general education offerings, Writing Proficiency courses at the 300-level would also be eligible for these linkages. For example, a link might include Library 201 with a 300-level WP2 or WP3 course.

Support and Expectations

Faculty selected to participate in the pilot links would receive a one-time \$1,000 stipend each to develop a link, plan for assessing the GUR competencies addressed by the link, coordinate the instruction, and provide a brief follow-up report to CUE assessing its

results. The link partners will be expected to coordinate their learning objectives as well as scheduling their major assignments in advance of the quarter when the link is offered, but are not expected to evaluate common products. Each course in the link will be offered as a separate class, but coordinated with its partner course before and during the quarter in which the link is offered. The 1-2 page assessment write-up should include numbers enrolled and retained, as well as evidence of learning gains and is due to CUE by the end of the quarter following the link offering. Stipends will be issued after submission of this write-up.

Application Process

Faculty interested in developing a link should apply as a pair and send a brief write-up to Steven Vanderstaay, steven.vanderstaay@wwu.edu with the following information:

- Faculty partner names and departments.
- Course titles and numbers to be linked.
- Academic quarter proposed for the link (can be any quarter in 2013-14).
- Academic literacy skills (written/oral/visual) to be addressed.
- Disciplinary content focus(i).
- Brief rationale (200-250 words) explaining how you think this particular link will enhance student learning.

Link applications will be reviewed by CUE as they are received. For additional details, contact CUE co-chair Carmen Werder, carmen.werder@wwu.edu

If interested in applying to do a link but unsure of a likely partner, come to this informational meeting or contact Carmen Werder for suggestions.



Viking Landing: Making the Most of Your GURs

February 19th • Drop in any time between 2 and 4 PM

Viking Landing is a drop-in informational session for students to hear from Academic Advisors (as well as GUR faculty and upper-division students) about how to think about the GURs and strategies for choosing them. The open house-like event will also provide information about opportunities for individual advising for next quarter. Refreshments served plus a drawing for a book store certificate.

Western Libraries Learning Commons • Wilson Library 282 (next to Tutoring Center)

NOTE: If you are teaching a class with students still negotiating the GURs, would you please announce the event to them? Also, if you have either taught GURs, are teaching them now, or plan to teach them in the future, you are especially encouraged to participate in this informational dialogue in an effort to help students approach the GURs not simply as courses to check off, but as opportunities.

To indicate your preferred time for participating, just go to:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/30E094AAAAF2DA13-viking

Sponsored by the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education,
the Committee on Undergraduate Education, and Academic Advising



Faculty and Departments Invited to Propose New FIG Clusters for Fall 2013.

FIG clusters link three courses—two GURs and an integrative 2-credit seminar—that freshmen take as a fall cohort. As part of the evolution of the program, departments can now propose clusters of their own.

Example: The Department of Journalism designed a FIG, “The Business of Journalism,” that linked their “Introduction to Mass Media” course to an Economics 101 course and a 2-credit FIG seminar on the role and influence of advertising, and money in general, in journalism. Journalism designed the seminar curricula and selected the instructor, whose salary was paid by the FIG program.

The VPUE is willing to consider other iterations of the cluster idea, such as a link between one GUR and a seminar, as long as the first-year mission is served. The VPUE is especially interested in clusters that serve

“real” interest groups, such as freshmen interested in medicine, law enforcement, climate science, public service, robotics, international relations, etc.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Participating departments withhold 25 seats in GURs linked to a FIG. The VPUE advertises the clusters to enrolled freshmen via mailings and Summerstart presentations. Freshmen simultaneously register for all courses in the FIG cluster through an electronic early-registration process.

FIG GUR faculty visit the seminar twice, share their syllabus with the seminar instructor, and coordinate with the seminar instructor regarding curricula. FIG seminars include academic content pertinent to the cluster theme and require a concluding paper, project or presentation. Department Chairs may select the seminar instructor. GUR faculty receive an honorarium of \$750-\$1,000 for their participation. NTT and TT faculty may participate.

**THE FIGS PROGRAM CONCEPT**

Part of Western's Academic First-Year Experience program, FIGS serves the University's First Year Mission and the goals of helping first-year students:

- understand the intellectual, moral, civic, and personal purposes of their liberal arts education;
- negotiate successfully the academic and personal opportunities and challenges of their first year; and
- connect to Western faculty and the larger campus community.

MORE INFORMATION ON FIGS CAN BE FOUND AT: [FIGs Program Link](#)

Faculty and departments interested in proposing FIG clusters are welcome to contact Steve VanderStaay at x3004 or Steven.VanderStaay@wwu.edu

General Education at Western Washington University

Everyone knows about Western's General University Requirements (GURs); they embody Western's belief that liberal education—education in breadth—is as important for informed and effective participation in contemporary life as specialized education. Yet not everyone is aware of Western's GUR academic learning outcomes. Indeed, the GUR program develops 11 specific competencies or learning outcomes. These are listed below, under four categories adopted from the AACU's Liberal Education for America's Promise (LEAP) initiative.

Knowledge of human cultures and the natural world.

Study multiple academic disciplines (accomplished by the requirement that the GURs be taken in a variety of academic disciplines).

Intellectual and practical skills.

1. Analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms
2. Analyze and interpret information from varied sources, including print and visual media.
3. Use quantitative and scientific reasoning to frame and solve problems.
4. Apply tools of technology, with an understanding of their uses and limitations.
5. Work collaboratively and manage projects to effective completion.

Personal and social responsibility.

6. Understand and evaluate assumptions, values, and beliefs in context of diverse local, national and global communities.
7. Understand and assess the impacts of interactions among the individual, society, and the environment.
8. Recognize the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of participating in, and contributing as a citizen in, a diverse society.
9. Reflect on one's own work and on the ethical dimensions of academic pursuits.

Integrative and applied learning.

10. Identify and analyze complex problems.
11. Explore, imagine and create.