

Towards the Preparation of the Sorsogon State College General Education Curriculum

Gerry S. Digo (Ed.D.)

Education and Accountancy Department, Sorsogon State College, Philippines
digogerry@yahoo.com

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Abstract - *The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued CMO No. 20, s. 2013 prescribing the new general education curriculum (GEC) for higher education institutions. Hence, this study aimed to prepare the Sorsogon State College (SSC) new GEC framework. The mixed-methods of research which involve the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study were used. Data gathering was conducted through survey and document analysis purposively selected and the results were examined through content analysis. The paper concluded that there is no uniform GEC for the undergraduate courses offered by SSC. The total number of units of the curriculum ranges from 44 to 85 units that require two to five years to be completed. Likewise, the codes, titles, descriptions, and placement of subjects in the curriculum vary for all of the courses. With the expanded secondary education students will have to complete 136 units in senior high school and a minimum of 36 units in first year college for a total of at least 172 units before they can pursue a certain profession. Hence, the proposed one academic year 45-unit general education curriculum framework that is anchored on the development of personal, intellectual and civic outcomes for the formation of a just and humane society was developed for SSC.*

Keywords: curriculum development, general education, liberal education, senior high school

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO [1] defines general education as education from kindergarten to the pre-university level which does not aim at any specialisation preparatory to a determined profession. General education according to Kosslyn et al. [2] of Harvard University is the place where students are brought to understand how everything that we teach in the arts and sciences relates to their lives and to the world that they will confront. Their kind of general education seeks to explicitly “connect a student’s liberal education to life beyond college”. It aims to prepare students for civic engagement, to teach students to understand themselves as products of, and participants in, traditions of art, ideas, and values; to enable students to respond critically and constructively to change; and to develop students’ understanding of the ethical dimensions of what they say and do. Furthermore, Conway [3] defines liberal education as a form of education whose purpose and rationale is to nurture culture in its recipients, whose value is to reside in its uniquely civilizing and humanizing capacity.

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has taken the lead in the development of the general education curriculum for the higher education institutions thru CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 59, s. 1996 [4] and CMO No. 04, s. 1997 [5] prescribing the minimum requirements and guidelines in the implementation of the GEC. Along these issuances, Torres and Goingo[6] prepared a position paper on the implementation of GEC-A and GEC-B vis-à-vis CMO No. 4, s. 1997. The concerns identified among others are the

effects on the teaching loads of departments servicing general education courses, the variations in the GEC-B implementations in various programs and recommended prescribing a minimum set of requirements for all, regardless of the major field of study that is 15 units per semester or a total of 60 units that is to be taken during the first two years in college. With the passage of Republic Act (RA) No. 10533 [7] and its implementing rules and regulation thru DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2013 [8] extending basic education to 13 years from kindergarten to grade 12, the new college readiness and work related standards were developed by CHED and TESDA respectively. Hence, CMO No. 20, s. 2013 [9] was issued by CHED which is the new policy reducing the minimum GEC from 63 units to 36 units by eliminating the remedial courses that are supposed to have been learned in basic education. In the new GEC, CHED identified the following outcomes: intellectual competences, personal and civic responsibilities, and practical skills. However, Ruscoe and Yeban[10] of Philippine Normal University (PNU) identified the following themes for their general education curriculum: communication skills, effective citizenship, scientific reasoning, aesthetic responses, philosophical and ethical inquiry, personal awareness, problem solving and technological literacy. Harvard University according to Kosslyn et al. [2] designed the GEC along four overarching goals focusing on civic engagement, understanding of self, responding to change, and understanding the ethical dimension of what they say and do. Cognizant of Article XIV, Section 3 (2) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution [11],

the new GEC for SSC was designed along personal, intellectual, and civic outcomes. The interdisciplinary nature of these themes converges in the form of a liberal education that looks beyond the development of the competencies along the identified outcomes and extends toward the advancement of an ideal community. Hence, the development of learners capable of living in a just and humane society shall be the noblest contribution of the SSC's GEC. Moreover, the new GEC for SSC was developed from the priority courses for senior high school for state universities and colleges as identified by CHED and from the result of the needs assessment conducted to ensure alignment in the design, implementation and evaluation of the basic and higher education curricula.

However, the Philippine Supreme Court [12] issued a temporary restraining order dated 21 April 2015 enjoining CHED from implementing and enforcing its provision, insofar as it excluded from the curriculum for college Filipino and Panitikan as core courses. Isles [13] prepared a position paper for CHED praying that the current GEC be maintained as defined in CMO No. 20, s. 2013 for it does not violate Section 6, Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution since the provisions should be understood in relation to other equally important Constitutional provisions, such as the guarantee of academic freedom. However, his position paper dealt only with the legal aspects of the proposal and left to other professionals the educational, pedagogical, cultural, and other aspects. Hence, this paper attempted to address the educational issues of the new curriculum with the prepared new GEC framework for the various courses offered by SSC.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper attempted to prepare the new GEC framework for SSC. Specifically, this paper aimed to: (1) compare the GEC of the various courses offered by the College; (2) determine the preferred track and strand vis-a-vis the senior high school curriculum that will be offered by the College; (3) present the changing GEC in the institutions of higher learning; and (4) describe the new general education curriculum of SSC.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The mixed-methods research as defined by Fraenkel and Wallen [14] used for this study involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study. Specifically, this research utilized the survey and document analysis to accomplish its objectives. The survey was conducted to 96 incoming senior high school students of the SSC Laboratory High School to determine the preferred track and strand for their senior high school. The mean ratings of the survey were computed and interpreted using the following rating scale: 3.5 – 4.0 – Most Preferred, 2.5 – 3.4 – Moderately Preferred, 1.5 – 2.4 – Least Preferred, and 1.0 – 1.4 – Not Preferred. Purposive sampling was used to determine the undergraduate curricular courses offered by the four campuses of SSC located at the four municipalities of Sorsogon namely Bulan, Castilla, Magallanes, and Sorsogon City. Content analysis was conducted on the undergraduate curricula of SSC vis-à-vis the CHED memoranda to obtain the information about the general education of identified courses and achieve the objectives of the study. Frequency count was used to analyse and present the results of the analyses. Finally, the SSC GEC was developed by adapting the curriculum framework as defined by UNESCO-IBE.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The General Education Curriculum of SSC

SSC Bulan Campus offers Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA), Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology (BSAT), Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BSCS), Bachelor of Science in Information System (BSIS), Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT), Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship (BSE), Bachelor in Public Administration (BPA), Bachelor in Technical Teacher Education (BTTE), and Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED).

The general education curricula of these courses are summarized in Table 1 except for BTTE and BSED which are presented in Table 3.

Table 1. Comparison of GEC for Courses in Bulan Campus

Area	Number of GE Units for the Courses Offered						
	BSA	BSE	BPA	BSAcT	BSCS	BSIT	BSIS
1. English and Literature	9	6	9	9	12	12	12
2. Filipino at Panitikan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
3. Mathematics	6	6	9	6	9	9	9
4. Natural Sciences and Technology	9	9	6	9	6	6	6
5. Social Sciences	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
6. Humanities	6	9	9	6	6	6	6
7. Life and Works of Rizal	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
8. Physical Education	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)
9. NSTP: LTS/CWTS/ROT	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)
TOTAL	51	51	54	51	54	54	54

N.B.Data were obtained from the SSC Academic Manual [15] vis-à-vis CMO No. 3, s. 2007 for BSA [16]; CMO No. 17, s. 2005 [17] for BSE; CMO No. 6, s. 2010 [18] for BPA; CMO No. 50, s. 2008 [19] for BSAcT; and CMO No. 53, s. 2006 [20] for BSCS, BSIT, and BSIS.

All the courses offered at SSC Bulan Campus follow the minimum requirement of 51 units for GEC-B of CMO No. 04, s. 1997. With the exception of BPA, all the other six courses are offering general education subjects that are extended to fourth or fifth year. Likewise, major subjects are already introduced as early as first year for all the curricular offerings.

For SSC Castilla Campus, the curricular offerings are as follow: Bachelor in Agricultural Technology (BAT), Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Technology (BSVT), Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (BS Agri.) and Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Development (BSAD). For SSC Magallanes Campus, the courses are Bachelor of Science in Fisheries (BSFi), Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED) and Two-year Micro-computer Servicing (MCS). The general education curricula of these courses are summarized in Table 2 except for BEED and BSED which are presented in Table 3. For BSFi the total of 85 units are obtained from the 53-unit GEC and 32-unit fundamental courses. The fundamental courses are mathematics (3), statistics (3), chemistry (10), physics (3), botany (5), zoology (5), and microbiology (3). For, BSAD, BS Agri. and BAT the total GEC units are equal or higher than the minimum requirement of 51 units for GEC-B of CMO No. 04, s. 1997. The two-year course however is only 7-unit short of the general education curriculum offered for degree courses. For BSFi, BAT, and BS Agri. general education subjects are extended to fourth year and major subjects are offered as early as first year first semester while for BSAD general education subjects are extended to 3rd year first semester.

SSC Sorsogon City Campus offers Bachelor in Technical Teacher Education (BTTE), Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED), Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor of Science in Engineering (BS Eng'g.), Bachelor of Science in Architecture (BS Archi.), Bachelor of Technology (BT), and Bachelor of Science in

Accountancy (BSA). The general education curricula of these courses are summarized in Table 3 except for BSA which is presented in Table 1. For BS in Archi., BS Eng'g. and BTTE the general education courses are in accordance with the 51-unit requirements of GEC-B of CMO No. 4, s. 2007. However, the total GEC units for BS Architecture and BS Engineering are supplemented with the technical courses. For BS Architecture, the technical courses include mathematics (13 units), natural sciences (9 units) and basic engineering courses (18 units) for a total of 40 units. For BS Engineering, the technical courses are mathematics (26 units), natural sciences (12 units), and basic engineering sciences (21 units) for a total of 59 units. BEED, BSED, and BT follow the minimum 63-unit requirements of CMO No. 59, s. 1996 or the GEC-A of CMO No. 04, s. 2007. For BS Archi., BEED, BSED, and BT the subjects are prorated to fourth or fifth year unlike in BTTE and BS Eng'g. where all the general education courses are completed by second year.

To be able to offer a uniform GEC, fundamental and technical courses should be addressed in the senior high school curriculum. Furthermore, physical education and NSTP subjects are not included in the counting of units in the GEC. If these two subjects are included the highest total units in GEC would be 99 units and the lowest would be 58 units. Hence, it is hereby recommended that all subjects in the GEC must be included in the counting and crediting of units. Likewise, three (BPA, BTTE and BS Eng'g.) of the courses offered by the College allow the students to finish the GEC in the first two years in college. Considering the nature of general education, it should be offered in the first year college and completion of which shall allow them to enroll in a course leading to a particular profession as early as second year college. Finally, the codes, titles and descriptions for the subjects are different in all the subject areas of the various curricular offerings and should be revised for predictability and consistency.

Table 2. Comparison of GEC for Courses in Castilla and Magallanes Campuses

Area	NUMBER OF GE UNITS FOR THE COURSES OFFERED					
	BSFi	BSVT	BSAD	BS Agri.	BAT	MCS
1. English and Literature	6	9	12	9	9	12
2. Filipino at Panitikan	6	6	12	6	6	6
3. Mathematics	12	6	6	9	6	8
4. Natural Sciences, and Technology	37	19	6	18	15	6
5. Social Sciences	12	15	15	12	9	9
6. Humanities	9	6	6	6	3	3
7. Life and Works of Rizal	3	3	3	3	3	-
8. Physical Education	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)
9. NSTP: LTS/CWTS/ROTC	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)
TOTAL	85	64	60	60	51	44

N.B. Data were obtained from the SSC Academic Manual (15) vis-à-vis CMO No. 43, s. 2006 [21] for BSFi; CMO No. 14, s. 2008 [22] for BS Agri.; CMO No. 48, s. 2007 [23] for BAT.

Table 3. Comparison of GEC for Courses in Sorsogon City Campus

Area	NUMBER OF GE UNITS FOR THE COURSES OFFERED					
	BS Eng'g.	BS Archi.	BEED	BSED	BT	BTTE
1. English and Literature	9	12	12	12	9	12
2. Filipino and Panitikan	6	6	12	12	6	9
3. Mathematics	26	13	6	6	9	6
4. Natural Sciences and Technology	12	9	9	9	18	12
5. Social Sciences	12	12	15	15	15	12
6. Humanities	9	6	6	6	3	6
7. Life and Works of Rizal	3	3	3	3	3	3
8. Physical Education	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)
10. NSTP: LTS/CWTS/ROTC	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)
TOTAL	77	61	63	63	63	60

N.B. Data were obtained from the SSC Academic Manual (15) vis-à-vis CMO No. 29, s. 2007 [24] for BSCE and CMO No. 09, s. 2008 [25] for BSME; CMO No. 61, s. 2006 [26] for BS Architecture; CMO No. 30, s. 2004 [27] for BEED and BSED and CMO No. 56, s. 2007 [28] for BTTE.

The Curriculum for SHS

The result of the survey conducted shows that the Academic track is the most preferred subject with a mean rating of 3.4 followed by Arts and Design with 2.4, Technical-Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) with 2.2 and Sport with 2.1. Hence, SSC can choose from the following academic strands: General Academic (GA), Accountancy, Business & Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Science (HumSS), or Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). However, the survey conducted further reveals that ABM and STEM with mean ratings of 3.0 and 2.8 respectively are moderately preferred by the respondents. This result is aligned with SSC BOT Resolution No. 9, s. 2015 [29] allowing SSC to offer STEM and TVL during the transition period. This is consistent with CMO 32, s. 2015 [30] allowing SUCs to offer STEM strand and TVL track excluding the other stands and tracks if there are service providers within a 10km radius or only if the available service provider is inadequate to meet the demand. The summary of the curriculum outline for STEM is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Placement of Subjects for STEM Strand

Area	UNITS PER GRADE AND SEMESTER				Total
	G11 1 st	G11 2 nd	G12 1 st	G12 2 nd	
1. English and Literature	4	4	12	-	20
2. Filipino at Panitikan	4	4	4	-	12
3. Mathematics	4	4	-	-	8
4. Natural Science, and Technology	8	8	4	12	32
5. Social Science	-	-	4	-	4
6. Humanities	4	4	-	-	8
7. Specialized Subjects	4	8	8	16	36
8. Physical Education	4	4	4	4	16
TOTAL	32	36	36	32	136

N.B. Assumptions: 20 weeks per semester, 80 hours per subject per semester as per analysis of documents available at <http://deped.gov.ph/k-to-12/curriculum-guides/Academic-Track> [31].

Table 5. Placement of Subjects for TVL Track

Area	UNITS PER GRADE AND SEMESTER				Total
	G11 1 st	G11 2 nd	G12 2 nd	G12 2 nd	
1. English and Literature	12	4	4	-	20
2. Filipino at Panitikan	8	4			12
3. Mathematics	4	4	4		12
4. Natural Science, and Technology	4	4	4	4	16
5. Social Science	-	-	4	-	4
6. Humanities	4	-	4	-	8
7. Specialized Subjects	-	16	8	24	48
8. Physical Education	4	4	4	4	16
TOTAL	36	36	32	32	136

N.B. Assumptions: 20 weeks per semester, 80 hours per subject per semester resulting from the analysis of documents available at <http://deped.gov.ph/k-to-12/curriculum-guides/Technical-Vocational-Track> [32].

For the STEM strand and TVL track, students will enroll 32 to 36 units per semester in grades 11 and 12. This is equivalent to 6.4 hours to 7.2 hours per day of actual contact time in school. The summary of the curriculum outline for TVL is presented in Table 5. When students graduate from senior high school along TVL and STEM they would have taken a total of 136 units which is higher than any of the existing total units for GEC as adapted by SSC from the minimum requirements of CHED.

The Changing CHED General Education Curricula

From the creation of the CHED in 1994 CMO No. 59, s. 1996 [4], CMO No. 4, s. 1997 [5], and CMO No. 20, s. 2013 [7] were issued for the GEC of higher education institutions. To compare the unit allocation the subjects were classified as shown in Table 6: English and literature, Filipino and panitikan, mathematics; natural science and technology; social science; humanities; physical education, Rizal's Life and Works, and National Service Training Program (NSTP). In these categories, the units were reduced from 24 to three units for language and literature; from six to three units for mathematics, from nine to six units for natural science and technology; from 21 to nine units for social science. However, humanities were increased from 6 units to 12 units while the same unit allocation was retained for Rizal's Life and Works and NSTP. These changes in the allocation of units with the identified categories show that teaching loads for language and literature will be affected because of the 21-unit reduction. Teaching loads for mathematics, science and technology will be barely affected for the three-unit reduction. However, the physical education curriculum in the old GEC is not included in the new GEC hence faculty loading for physical education will be affected in the implementation of the new curriculum.

Table 6. Comparison of CHED General Education Curricula

Area	GEC		New GEC ³	
	A ¹ (Units)	B ² (Units)	Core (Units)	Elective (Units)
1. English and Literature	15	9	3	NA
2. Filipino at Panitikan	9	6		
3. Mathematics	6	6	3	NA
4. Natural Science and Technology	9	9	3	3
5. Social Science	21	12	6	3
6. Humanities	6	6	9	3
7. Rizal's Life and Works	3	3		3
8. NSTP: LTS/CWTS/ROTC	(6)	(6)	(6)	
9. Physical Education	(12)	(12)		NA
TOTAL	63	51	36 units	

N.B. ¹CMO No. 59, s. 1996 [4], ²CMO No. 4, s. 1997 [5], and ³CMO No. 20, s. 2013 [7]

Therefore, faculty members handling physical education, language and literature, should be prioritized for

scholarship and faculty development grants during the transition period. Faculty members can go on scholarships to finish their master's or doctoral degrees or can undergo research, extension, immersion, production, training, or fellowship. Faculty members who may be displaced can become teachers for SHS in the SSC Laboratory High School and should be identified by March 2016 for their training as senior high school teachers starting SY 2016 – 2017.

General Education Curriculum Framework for SSC

A curriculum framework is a document which describes the aspiration for the future of the country, defines the priorities for education, and establishes the parameters for the development of other curriculum documents according to UNESCO-IBE [33]. Hence, the framework of SSC GEC is designed to include the following parts:

- **Introduction.** General education is the curriculum common to all undergraduate students regardless of the profession they are to pursue. It exposes them to various domains of knowledge and ways of comprehending social and natural realities to develop personal, intellectual and civic competencies necessary for the establishment of a just and humane society.
- **Policy Statements.** CMO No. 20, s. 2013 [9] prescribes the new minimum 36-unit requirement for the new general education curriculum for higher education institutions. In effect, this document amended CMO No. 4, s. 1997 [5] and CMO No. 59, s. 1996 [4] which were used as some of the legal bases for the general education program of the SSC curricular offerings. Hence, the new GEC framework shall be adopted for the new curricular offerings of the College that will be implemented starting S.Y. 2018 – 2019.
- **Structure of the SSC GEC.** The curriculum is intended to be completed in the first year of college, 21 units per semester for a total of 42 units for one academic year. A semester is made up of 18 weeks for a total of 54 contact hours for each three-unit subject.
- **Learning Outcomes.** Any student who enrolls in the SSC GEC is expected to: (1) develop the identity as a moral, ethical, and intellectual person; (2) contribute meaningfully to the development of a just and humane Filipino society; and (3) respect the global community by appreciating the fundamental humanity of all. The learning outcomes are categorized into the following themes: personal, intellectual and civic. The personal competencies are the ability to appreciate the human conditions, interpret the human experience, reflect critically on shared concerns, create innovative solutions guided by ethical standards, and develop self-assuredness in knowing and being Filipino. Intellectual competencies are the ability to negotiate the world of technology responsibly, apply different analytical modes in tackling problems methodically, apply computing and information technology to assist and facilitate research,

demonstrate higher levels of comprehension, communicate proficiently and effectively, understand the basic concepts across domains of knowledge, think critically, analytically, and creatively, solve real world problems, improve basic work-related skills and knowledge, and work effectively individually or in a group. And, the civic competencies are the abilities to appreciate and contribute to artistic beauty, understand and respect human rights, view the contemporary world from both local and global perspectives, and reflect on moral norms as they affect individuals and society.

• **Curriculum Content, Learning Areas and Subjects.**

Table 7 presents the learning areas, codes, titles and placement of the subjects per semester. The five interdisciplinary learning areas are language and literature, mathematics, natural science and technology, humanities, and social science. Life, works and writings of Jose Rizal and NSTP as required by RA No. 1425 [34] and RA No. 9163 [35] respectively are included as mandated subjects. The course codes allow the identification of subjects as core or elective and provide the information as to the year level, semester, and number of subjects for each area.

• **Standards of Resources Required for Implementation.**

Faculty in GEC subjects are master’s degree holder which is the minimum academic qualification to teach in college. Library holdings, laboratories and other facilities are expected to provide adequate and support structures needed for the effective, efficient and timely attainment of learning outcomes.

• **Teaching Methodology.** Teaching methodologies without abridging the academic freedom of the College and of the faculty should consider the interdisciplinary nature of the general education courses. However, the preference for learning centered education focuses on the role of teachers as facilitator of learning is highly desired. Furthermore, the official languages of instruction are Filipino and English.

• **Assessing Student Achievement.** Assessment shall accommodate traditional and contemporary methods to allow students to demonstrate their learning along the identified course outcomes. Furthermore, research shall be an integral component of the rating system.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There is no uniform GEC in all the courses offered by SSC which ranges from 44 to 85 units that require two to five years to be completed. Furthermore, codes, titles, descriptions, and placement of subjects vary for all the general education courses offered by the College. With the expanded secondary education students will have to complete 136 units in senior high school and a minimum of 36 units in first year college for a total of at least 172 units before they can pursue a certain profession. Hence, the proposed one academic year 45-unit general education curriculum framework was prepared for review and approval of the SSC Academic Council, CHED Office of Program Standards and the SSC Board of Trustees.

Table 7. Proposed SSC General Education Curriculum

Learning Areas	Codes	Course Title	Semester		Total
			1 st	2 nd	
1. Language and Literature	CLang111	Purposive Communication	3		6
	CLang122	AngWika at Panitikang Filipino		3	
2. Mathematics	CMath111	Mathematics in the Modern World	3		3
3. Natural Science, and Technology	CNST111	Science, Technology and Society	3		6
	ENST121	Environmental Science or People and the Earth’s Ecosystem or Human Reproductions or Living in the IT Era		3	
4. Humanities	CHum111	Art Appreciation	3		9
	Chum122	Ethics		3	
	EHum123	Great Books or Philippine Popular Culture or Indigenous Creative Crafts or Reading Visual Art		3	
5. Social Science	CSocSci111	Understanding the Self	3		21
	CSocSci112	Readings in Philippine History	3		
	CSocSci123	The Contemporary World		3	
	ESocSci124	Religions, Religious Experiences and Spirituality or Philippine Indigenous Communities or Gender and Society or The Entrepreneurial Mind		3	
	MS111	Life, Works and Writings of Jose Rizal	3		
	MS112	NSTP 1: LTS/CWTS/ROTC	3		
	MS113	NSTP 2: LTS/CWTS/ROTC		3	
TOTAL			24	21	45

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