UH System Passport Proposal
Based on the WICHE Interstate Passport Model

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In 2012 UH West O‘ahu (UHWO) and Leeward Community College (LEECC) were selected as pilot campuses to create a portable General Education curriculum that could transfer across state lines without causing students to lose credits, thus forcing them to retake courses. Thousands of students each year currently suffer this unfortunate fate when transferring from state to state or from 2-year colleges to universities within their own state.


As pilot campuses, UHWO and LEECC were involved in faculty-driven negotiations with other institutions on the mainland that agreed upon proficiency level criteria for courses within each Learning Block. One example of how that principle worked was that in nearly all of the Passport member colleges, students were required to take two courses of English composition, while in the case of UHWO and LEECC, it was determined that the single course of ENG 100 satisfied that requirement. Building upon that foundation, LEECC and UHWO have sought ways of further aligning their Passport with their respective Gen Ed Cores, bearing in mind that both campuses have active and established Gen Ed Committees that have traditionally reviewed each course for designation approval.

In Spring 2018 a proposal was brought to the LEECC Gen Ed Committee to more fully align the Gen Ed Core with the Interstate Passport (attachment 1). In that proposal the 31 credit Gen Ed was reduced to the credit equivalent of 28 credits by reducing one of two required courses in two areas and adding Oral Communication (OC), which is not part of LEECC’s Gen Ed Core. This was approved by the Gen Ed Committee and has been entered into LEECC’s page on the WICHE Interstate Passport site.

More recently, UHWO and LEECC have been charged with investigating the viability of implementing the Passport across the UH System. The two campuses have endeavored to align their respective Passports (while remaining cognizant of WASC expectations) and have arrived at the point where they nearly match. Although the Passport is based on learning outcomes rather than on courses and credits, course and credit equivalencies are listed in the attached tables to illustrate the relation of our Gen Ed Core to the nine Passport Learning Blocks. The UHWO proposal has 31-equivalent credits, retains the OC block, and has variable credit in
Human Cultures and Creative Expression (attachment 2). The LEECC proposal adds a 3-credit OC course onto the existing 31-credit Gen Ed, resulting in a 34-credit Gen Ed (attachment 3). Either model is viable. However, if the Passport is to be implemented effectively across the System—or even at any individual unit—it is essential for participating campuses to establish a consensus of reciprocation. Specifically, we need to extend the core principle of reciprocity that underpins EP 5.209 on “UH System Student Transfer and Intercampus Articulation” from General Education to the Interstate Passport. In other words, in order to minimize obstacles and make the Passport attainable for students, each campus must agree to accept the Passport category “stamp” awarded by another campus. For example, if ART 113 - Intro to Drawing meets the Creative Expression Passport Category at LEECC, then UHWO should consider transfer students who have completed that course at LEECC to have fulfilled that Passport requirement, even if ART 113 is not part of the UHWO Passport or not even offered on its campus. Reciprocity is essential given the fact that our students rarely restrict themselves to taking courses on a single campus for the duration of the college careers.

If the decision of the CCAO is that the Passport should serve students who transfer outside of the UH system and within it, there are a number of advantages for the students and the institution including:

- The Passport assures students the full acceptance of their earned Gen Ed Core not only within the UH system, but also within the growing list of Passport member colleges and universities across the country (attachment 4).

- It allows UH institutions to save time and resources on transcript evaluations. When students transfer from Passport schools, those are 30-some credits that don’t have to be evaluated.

- To earn a Passport, students must achieve a minimum grade of C or its equivalent in all courses in the Passport Blocks, so UH system students who do not qualify for the Passport can still matriculate based on their campus’ existing Gen Ed program.

With the proposals to align our Gen Ed Core to the Passport, it must be stressed that the Passport does not replace our Gen Ed Core, but rather repackage it for the some 50% of UHCC students who transfer to non-UH colleges with only 60% of that group currently able to bring all or most of their credits in transfer to receiving institutions (attachments 5, 6). Our campuses’ Gen Ed committees will continue to be as necessary as ever as the primary academic reviewing body. Furthermore, campuses will still retain the right to maintain and develop campus-specific graduation requirements as they see fit.

We recommend that the CCAO endorse the construction of Passport Learning Blocks across the System while embracing the principle of reciprocity when awarding Passport stamps. The CCAO should also explore the possibility of implementation of the Passport as a vehicle for student transfer within the System.