TO: Academic Senate

FROM: Committee on Instruction and Curriculum

SUBJECT: Learning Outcomes for the Lifelong Understanding General Education Requirement

PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION REQUESTED: Approve Learning Outcomes for Lifelong Understanding General Education (G.E.) Courses

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: When the Academic Senate approved the new G.E. program in June 2003, it reinstated the Lifelong Understanding requirement. Lifelong Understanding is required by the CSU Chancellor’s Executive Order (E.O.) 595 and had been included under all General Education programs prior to 1996. Specifically, E.O. 595 and the new G.E. program both require a course with a focus on “lifelong understanding and development of humans as integrated physiological and psychological entities.” Pre-1996 G.E. program Catalog descriptions of the Lifelong Understanding requirement included a long list of possible topics, such as human behavior, sexuality, nutrition, health, stress, key relationships of humankind to the social and physical environment, and implications of death and dying.

Since the Senate in 1997 required that future G.E. programs be assessed, it is necessary to write learning outcomes for all G.E. requirements, including Lifelong Understanding, so that there is a basis for assessment.

The proposed outcomes were drafted by the Lifelong Understanding Outcomes Subcommittee of CIC, which approved them on December 5, 2003. They were amended and approved by CIC, by a vote of 9-0-0, on February 16, 2004. CIC’s amendments added the words in boldface at the end of #1 (as the key component of any lifelong understanding requirement) and deleted the word “advanced” in three places in #5. CIC’s members felt that there should be some writing, oral communication and critical thinking skills taught in all lifelong understand courses, but that it was too much to demand the teaching of these skills at an advanced level, in view of the already heavy skills requirements for Areas B, C and D (one of which is likely to overlap with nearly all Lifelong Understanding courses).
This upper division requirement will probably, in most cases, be completed by students taking a course that simultaneously fulfills the requirements for upper division Area B, Natural Sciences; Area C, Humanities; or Area D, Social Sciences. Lifelong Understanding courses may also be free-standing. Area B courses must include “numeracy, quantitative analysis, information literacy and critical thinking skills.” Area C courses must include “a significant writing component and emphasize advanced communication and critical thinking skills.” Area D courses must apply “the methodologies and research findings of the social sciences to significant contemporary problems and emphasize advanced writing and information literacy skills.”

**Learning Outcomes for Area E, Lifelong Understanding**

Courses meeting the Lifelong Understanding General requirement will provide students with the opportunity to study topics related to the human condition through interdisciplinary modes of inquiry. These courses should integrate and analyze the intellectual and epistemological approaches to knowledge employed by distinct disciplinary fields.

After taking a course that satisfies the Lifelong Understanding Requirement, students will:

1. Be able to integrate knowledge from at least two of the three major disciplines, broadly construed: 1) Area B (science), 2) Area C (humanities), 3) Area D (social science) to address a particular topic that focuses on lifelong understanding and development of humans as integrated physiological, social and psychological entities. Topics may include human behavior, sexuality, nutrition, health, stress, key relationships of humankind to the social and physical environment and implications of death and dying, as well as others, in which humans are seen as integrated mental and physical beings.

2. Be able to analyze the methods of inquiry and modes of knowledge within and across the aforementioned disciplines.

3. Be able to articulate two or more sides, approaches, or perspectives to a given issue.

4. Have demonstrated an ability to integrate knowledge from the aforementioned disciplines in an oral, written and/or multimedia presentation, accessible to a wide audience, concerning an issue or problem in which students must:
   - Critically analyze data, information, arguments, or concepts, and,
   - Develop and defend one or more hypotheses or viewpoints.

5. Have demonstrated advanced writing, advanced oral communication, and advanced critical thinking skills.