

Amendment to the GE Draft Resolution - 11/7/2019

We make a motion to amend the GE Draft Resolution to include The Active Body requirement.

The Active Body: Moving Toward Health & Well-Being GE Requirement

Description

One course of any credit value in which students engage in a body-based movement practice or activity as the primary mode of learning. Courses with the *Active Body* attribute expand students' experiences in and understanding of the capacity of movement to develop and promote lifelong health and well-being of the whole person.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- learn a body-based movement practice.
- comprehend the multiple benefits of movement through body-based practices, thereby encouraging the development of both short and long-term health and well-being.
- reflect on their experiences and how these have impacted their feelings, values, and attitudes regarding movement and long-term health and well-being.

Rationale

The body is a dynamic and adaptive organism that is interconnected with our cognitive and sensory systems and processes.

Data show that

- regular physical activity has positive effects on the body, our cognition, and emotional processes and states, while the lack of regular physical activity has inverse effects.
- regular physical activity can help mitigate the symptoms and effects of mental health issues.
- almost 40% of college students experience a significant mental health issue and 67% of students with anxiety or depression don't seek treatment.

The Active Body requirement ensures that students will have a mentored movement experience that will positively impact their physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being while at St. Olaf and beyond. It also ensures that students will have access to a more diverse curriculum that includes nonlinguistic study through the body that values internal sensations, physical perceptions, experiences, and knowing.

FAQ

Why the Active Body as the title of this requirement?

The Active Body Committee understands that using the word, active, in the title may be problematic for some, and we are sensitive to this. We are open to considering alternative language that retains the core values of the requirement - experiencing and learning using the body in motion as the primary mode of inquiry.

At the same time, the committee is interested in expanding perceptions of body-based learning and promoting the idea that the body is a relevant site and modality for inquiry. We believe that being active exists on a spectrum, and the wide range of courses offering the Active Body requirement will provide learning experiences for students all along the spectrum.

Can departments and programs across the campus offer courses that fit this requirement?

Yes. While it is true that the majority of courses are currently housed in Exercise Science and Dance, there are several other departments (Biology, Philosophy, Music, Art) that have offered courses that could fit this new requirement (e.g. PHIL 127: Zen and the Art of Judo, MUSIC 271: Music Performance Science). We can envision other departments such as Religion, Theater, Nursing, Asian Studies, Neuroscience, and Psychology developing Active Body courses as well. Workshops similar to the current EIN and WRI requirements could be offered to all faculty interested in teaching an Active Body course.

Will students with physical accommodations be able to complete this requirement?

Yes. Currently, because physical accommodation requests comprise a small percentage of all accommodation requests, when made aware of a student's need for accommodation, the departments offering body-based movement courses work with individual students to provide appropriate accommodation. The Office of Disability and Access supports the addition of the Active Body requirement to the new GE and from this moment forward will officially partner with departments offering this requirement to provide clear and coordinated support of students' accommodation needs. Departments now offering such courses are also poised to partner with the College as it plans and implements its policies and practices to further increase access across the curriculum. To this end, Exercise Science created a class called Inclusive Fitness in which students of all abilities can participate. The development of additional courses with inclusivity and accessibility as primary goals will soon follow. Additionally, there are courses in other departments that could fulfill the Active Body requirement and can also be designed with inclusivity and accessibility as primary goals.

Won't students be active on their own?

To quote a recent Inside Higher Ed article, "Students don't do optional." Students are less physically active than the public might expect. Data show that nearly 50% of students participate in recreation less than once a week, 16.7% never participate, and only 1.4% do these activities at least five times a week.

Will athletes on college-sponsored teams be exempt from this requirement?

Yes. Due to the rigorous and consistent attention to student health and well-being, mentored by the professional coaching staff, student-athletes on college-sponsored teams will be exempt from this requirement.

Will students participating in club sports, intramural teams, and dance clubs be exempt from this requirement?

No. While these activities are seen as positive, they lack mentorship by faculty or professional coaching staff and consistent attention to student health and well-being.

Isn't one of the goals of the Core Curriculum to reduce the overall credits students need to fulfill the GE requirements? Won't this requirement add to that total?

The Active Body Core requirement may be earned in a 0.25 fractional credit course. These courses have fewer contact hours and require significantly less out of class work than 1.0 credit courses, and they will not substantively impact the number of electives that students are able to take in any given term or overall.

The trend in higher education is to remove physical activity as a GE requirement. Why should St. Olaf keep a requirement that focuses on physical learning and development?

By including the Active Body as a curricular requirement, St. Olaf has the opportunity to positively distinguish itself from its peer institutions, play a role in reversing alarming physical and mental health trends in its current students and future alums, and demonstrate through policy and action that it places the quality of life and education of each of its students as its highest priority. Boe House Counseling Center wholeheartedly endorses the addition of the Active Body requirement to the new GE. What we require of students is an indication of what we value as an institution.

Resources

- [Depression and anxiety: Exercise eases symptoms](#)
- [How simply moving benefits your mental health](#)
- [Exercise for Mental Health](#)
- [In Loco Personal Trainer](#)