GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

GE-013-256

New GE course proposal:

Hospitality Management 3600 – Food Waste and Sustainable Future
New GE Area 4C
Upper Division Social and Behavioral Sciences

General Education Committee	Date: 3/11/2026
Executive Committee Received and Forwarded	Date: 3/11/2026
Academic Senate	Date: 3/18/2026

Background

Explores the social, behavioral, and institutional dimensions of food waste and sustainability in contemporary food systems. Investigate the economic, cultural, and policy factors contributing to food waste and apply social science approaches to analyze its environmental and social impacts. Through field-based projects at The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch, Cal Poly Pomona dining facilities, or similar establishments, assess real-world food waste practices and develop data-informed recommendations for more sustainable operations and community food systems.

1. **Analyze** the social, economic, and behavioral factors contributing to food waste across individual, organizational, and policy levels.
2. **Evaluate** sustainability strategies using social science frameworks to understand their environmental, ethical, and community impacts.
3. **Apply** research and data collection methods to assess food waste practices in real-world foodservice operations (e.g., The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch, campus dining facilities).
4. **Develop** evidence-based and actionable recommendations to reduce food waste and promote sustainable food system practices.
5. **Communicate** findings and recommendations effectively in both written and oral forms appropriate for academic, industry, and civic audiences.

Core Topics to Be Covered (all sections if multiple sections are offered):

1. Introduction to Food Waste and Sustainability

a. Overview of global and local food systems.
b. The social, economic, and environmental impacts of food waste.
c. Key stakeholders: consumers, producers, distributors, policymakers.

2. Social and Behavioral Perspectives on Food Waste

a. Psychological and cultural drivers of waste behavior.
b. Food consumption patterns, values, and perceptions of “waste.”
c. Community and institutional approaches to behavior change.

3. Policy, Ethics, and Systems Approaches

a. Food policy frameworks, waste management, and sustainability legislation.
b. Ethical considerations: food insecurity, equity, and circular economy principles.
c. The role of hospitality and tourism industries in sustainable food systems.

4. Fieldwork and Data Collection

a. Students engage in field-based research at The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch, Cal Poly Pomona Dining Services, or similar operations.
b. Collect and analyze data on food purchasing, preparation, consumption, and waste generation.
c. Apply social science and sustainability frameworks to interpret findings.

5. Intervention Design and Recommendations

a. Develop practical, data-informed strategies to reduce food waste.
b. Evaluate feasibility, cost, and ethical implications of proposed solutions.
c. Present findings in professional formats (oral presentation, written report, or policy brief).

Proposed Assignments Across All Sections

A. **Fieldwork Project (team-based) (30%):** Conduct food waste analysis at a designated campus or community site, collect data, and write a report proposing sustainability interventions (for Information Literacy and Civic Literacy GE SLOs).

B. **Critical Reflection Essay (20%)**: Evaluate the social, behavioral, and ethical implications of food waste in diverse cultural and economic contexts (for *Critical Thinking* and *Intercultural Engagement* GE SLOs).

C. **Class Presentation (team-based) (20%)**: Present key findings and recommendations to an applied audience (e.g., dining services or campus sustainability representatives) to demonstrate oral communication skills. (for *Communication* GE SLOs).

D. **Quizzes or Exams (30%)**: Assess understanding of theories and frameworks in sustainability, behavioral science, and policy. (for *Critical Thinking* GE SLOs).

This course fulfills the Area 4C GE requirement by deepening students' understanding of how human behavior, social systems, and institutional practices influence sustainability outcomes. It introduces students to the principles, methodologies, and ethical frameworks used in the social sciences to analyze and propose solutions to real-world food system challenges.

Through fieldwork at campus dining operations (e.g., The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch, Cal Poly Pomona Dining Services) and related facilities, students apply theory to practice — embodying Cal Poly Pomona's "become-by-doing" philosophy. The course's applied component strengthens students' critical thinking, information literacy, and civic literacy skills, preparing them to engage in evidence-based problem solving and social responsibility in their professional and community lives.

Relation to GE Learning Outcomes:

Since this course is intended for GE certification, it is aligned to GE outcomes rather than program-specific PLOs. Specifically, the course addresses:

- **Critical Thinking** – by analyzing social, behavioral, and policy systems shaping food waste.
- **Information Literacy** – by engaging in data collection, evaluation, and analysis through field-based research.
- **Civic Literacy / Intercultural Engagement** – by developing culturally aware, community-based recommendations for sustainable practices.
- **Communication Literacy (Written and Oral)** – by articulating research findings through written reports and oral presentations for diverse audiences.

Optional HRT Program Role:
For Hospitality Management (HRT) majors, this course may also serve as an upper-division elective within the major. It complements program learning outcomes related to sustainability, ethical leadership, and operational decision-making by allowing students to apply classroom learning to real-world foodservice contexts. Achieving the GE learning outcomes in the unique setting of restaurants and dining halls further strengthens this course's relevance to the HRT domain. However, students choosing to count the course toward the major may not also count it for GE credit, consistent with Cal Poly Pomona's policy on double-counting.

As an HRT upper-division elective, this course aligns with existing program learning outcomes focused on ethical leadership, operational decision-making, and community engagement, but with an adding/extra component of sustainability. Like other HRT electives, it enhances students' ability to apply critical thinking and data-driven approaches to real-world hospitality challenges. What makes this course unique within the elective list is its emphasis on social science inquiry and sustainability analysis, which connects hospitality operations to broader societal and environmental systems. By integrating fieldwork and policy evaluation, the course focuses on niche content and prepares students for emerging professional roles in sustainable foodservice management, corporate social responsibility, and environmental stewardship, positioning graduates to lead sustainability initiatives across diverse hospitality sectors.

Contribution to University Mission:

The course advances Cal Poly Pomona's inclusive polytechnic identity by integrating interdisciplinary perspectives, community partnerships, and applied research. It equips students to make informed, ethical, and practical contributions to sustainability efforts on campus and beyond.

GE Student Learning Outcomes:

Critical Thinking: All major assignments, especially the Critical Reflection Essay and Fieldwork Project, require students to analyze the causes and impacts of food waste from multiple social and behavioral perspectives. Students interpret empirical data, apply theoretical frameworks, and formulate evidence-based conclusions about sustainability challenges. The Class Presentation and Quizzes reinforce logical reasoning and synthesis of concepts. Together, these tasks cultivate the ability to evaluate complex social problems and propose reasoned, data-informed solutions.

Information Literacy: The Fieldwork Project and Critical Reflection Essay trains students to locate, evaluate, and integrate credible information from scholarly and applied sources. Students collect primary data through observation and measurement of food waste practices and interpret secondary research on sustainability. They demonstrate responsible data use through proper citation, analytical accuracy, and ethical handling of information. Presentations and quizzes further reinforce their understanding of how data informs decision-making in sustainability and policy contexts.

Civic Literacy: Students link their analyses to civic responsibility by examining the ethical and policy dimensions of food waste and sustainability. In the Fieldwork Project and Presentation, teams design actionable interventions for campus dining operations, highlighting their potential community impact. The Reflection Essay connects personal choices and institutional systems to broader social accountability. These assignments encourage students to engage as informed, responsible participants in addressing sustainability challenges locally and globally.

Quantitative Literacy: Through the Fieldwork Project, students collect and interpret numerical data such as waste volume, production ratios, and cost impacts. They learn to translate these quantitative findings

into practical insights and communicate them through written and visual formats. Quizzes test students' comprehension of quantitative reasoning and their ability to interpret basic statistics related to sustainability metrics.

Intercultural Engagement: The Reflection Essay and Class Presentation ask students to explore how cultural norms, economic structures, and global inequities shape food production and consumption patterns. Students compare cross-cultural sustainability initiatives and consider culturally responsive approaches to food waste reduction. This engagement broadens students' understanding of global citizenship and promotes empathy for diverse practices surrounding food and resource use.

Oral Communication: Students synthesize and communicate research findings through a professional Class Presentation to peers, instructors, and invited stakeholders such as Dining Services or campus sustainability representatives. This experience develops students' ability to organize complex information, use visual aids effectively, and adapt communication style for both academic and civic audiences.

Written Communication: Both the Fieldwork Report and Critical Reflection Essay strengthen students' written communication skills through iterative drafting, instructor feedback, and integration of data and theory. Students learn to organize arguments logically, support claims with evidence, and write with clarity and precision appropriate to interdisciplinary sustainability topics.

HRT 3600: Food Waste and Sustainable Future fulfills the objectives of GE Area 4C by engaging students in the social and behavioral study of sustainability and food systems. The course centers on understanding how human behavior, social structures, and institutional practices contribute to food waste and how these patterns can be changed through evidence-based, community-oriented solutions. Using social science inquiry, students analyze real-world data, interpret policy frameworks, and evaluate ethical and cultural factors influencing sustainability.

Alignment with Area 4C Content Expectations - Consistent with Area 4C requirements, this course provides students with:

- **A deeper and broader understanding** of how individual, organizational, and policy-level decisions shape sustainability outcomes within food systems.
- **Exposure to principles and methodologies** of social and behavioral science, including data collection, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and interpretation of human behavior.
- **An applied focus on social problems**, as students conduct fieldwork at The Restaurant at Kellogg Ranch and Cal Poly Pomona Dining Services to examine food waste practices and propose feasible solutions.
- **Multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives**, integrating hospitality management, environmental studies, sociology, and policy analysis to situate food waste within global sustainability challenges.

Alignment with GE SLOs and Assessment - This course explicitly assesses the following General Education Student Learning Outcomes:

- **Critical Thinking**: Students apply logical reasoning and theoretical frameworks to analyze causes and impacts of food waste and to propose data-informed sustainability strategies.
- **Information Literacy**: Through fieldwork and research, students identify, collect, evaluate, and synthesize information from scholarly and applied sources to support their analyses and recommendations.
- **Civic Literacy**: Students translate their findings into community-focused sustainability recommendations that promote ethical responsibility and civic engagement.
- **Communication (Written and Oral)**: Students develop professional-quality reports and presentations tailored to academic, industry, and public audiences.

Inclusivity and Interdisciplinary Relevance:
The course is designed to be accessible to all students, regardless of major, by emphasizing general social science principles, experiential learning, and collaborative inquiry rather than discipline-specific technical skills. Students are introduced to sustainability issues relevant to daily life and global contexts, connecting classroom learning to civic responsibility and professional ethics.

Polytechnic and Applied Learning Integration:
Aligned with Cal Poly Pomona's inclusive polytechnic identity, the course integrates experiential, data-driven learning through direct engagement with campus dining operations and sustainability initiatives. This field-based approach encourages students to connect theoretical learning with professional practice, demonstrating how applied social science can lead to tangible environmental and social improvements.
Through its interdisciplinary approach, fieldwork-based pedagogy, and civic engagement focus, *HRT 3600* embodies the intent of GE Area 4C. It helps students develop critical thinking, research, and communication skills while cultivating ethical awareness and social responsibility in addressing one of today's most pressing global challenges—food waste and sustainability.

Resources Consulted

HRT provided both an ECO and example syllabus for the course, uploaded to Curriculog.

On November 26, 2025, General Education Committee sent out a solicitation email to the following constituencies:

- Department chairs
- Deans and associate deans

We asked to provide input via online survey to ensure that new GE course proposals aligned with the existing GE policy, including learning outcomes and concerns surrounding expertise. Responses were collected through mid-December. GE Committee received **no response** about this course.

GE Committee sent a second email to department chairs on February 13, but also solicited feedback from faculty colleagues affiliated with the Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies. We received **no response** from this course.

Discussion

GE Committee received this referral on November 13, 2025. This course is being evaluated to ensure compliance with CPP's General Education Policy (GE-001-245), passed by the Senate in 2024.

This course is applying for **GE Area 4C: Upper Division Social and Behavioral Sciences**. In addition to meeting the core subject matter requirements for this area, new courses must include the learning outcomes **Critical Thinking** and **Information Literacy**, along with meaningful assessment of those outcomes in both the ECO and the syllabus. For this upper-division GE, departments must also include either **Intercultural Engagement** or **Civic Literacy**, and one of the following: **Written Communication**, **Oral Communication**, or **Quantitative Literacy**.

This course examines the social, behavioral, economic, and policy dimensions of food waste within contemporary food systems, using social science frameworks to analyze how human behavior and institutional practices shape sustainability outcomes. Students conduct field-based research in campus dining operations, collect and interpret data, and develop evidence-based recommendations to reduce food waste and improve sustainable practices. Assessment includes a team fieldwork project and report, a critical reflection essay, class presentations to applied audiences, and quizzes or exams evaluating theoretical and quantitative understanding.

This course meets Area 4C by centering the social and behavioral study of food waste, examining it through economic, cultural, policy, and institutional perspectives in contemporary and global contexts. It engages students in social science methodologies such as fieldwork, data collection, policy analysis, and ethical evaluation, though the historical dimension is less emphasized than the contemporary focus. While the course includes applied elements in hospitality settings, it remains grounded in social problem analysis rather than technical skills training. It provides a deeper understanding of sustainability concepts and requires students to apply them to the concrete social problem of food waste, aligning well with the area's applied social science expectations.

To meet the GE SLOS of GE Area 4C, the course claims Critical Theory and Information Literacy. However, the course also includes all other GE eligible learning outcomes. In university-level assessments, departments will be required to produce artifacts for each learning outcome they claim. Thus, they might consider removing some of these learning outcomes. In addition, several of the outcomes are assessed through the same major assignments, which may make it difficult to clearly distinguish how each SLO is independently measured and evaluated.

The syllabus should also include the copy of the text of the GE Meaning and Purpose Statement.

Recommendation

The GE Committee has completed discussion of this proposal and identified substantive concerns regarding alignment with current GE policy in both the ECO and syllabus. The committee will vote open on March 9, 2026 and results will be available on March 11, 2026. This timeline is intended to allow sufficient time, if appropriate, for a first reading before the end of the academic year. The final recommendation will be transmitted to the Executive Committee upon conclusion of the vote.