Implementing a **First-Year Foundation** based on the principles of a living curriculum requires a departure from traditional "General Education" distribution requirements toward an integrated core that builds **learning velocity** and **agency** .

Below is a proposed design for this foundational year, structured around capability building rather than simple knowledge transmission.

### Phase 1: The Agency & Tooling Intensive (Weeks 1–6)

Before academic content is introduced, students must master the "stack" required for self-directed learning .

* **Metacognition & Self-Regulation:** Students learn goal-setting, time management, and the discipline needed to sit with difficult material without immediate AI "assistance" .
* **Critical AI Literacy:** A deep dive into how large language models work, focusing on identifying hallucinations, understanding algorithmic bias, and the ethics of datafication .
* **Prompting as Logic:** Transitioning from treating AI as an "oracle" to using it as a **thought partner** to critique drafts and explore alternative arguments .

### Phase 2: The Interdisciplinary Challenge (Weeks 7–18)

Students move from individual study to high-stakes, team-based projects co-designed with community partners .

* **The "Crucible" Project:** Teams (e.g., a biology student, a business student, and a philosopher) are assigned a real-world problem, such as "Optimizing Regional Water Usage During Drought" or "Designing Ethical Patient Intake Systems" .
* **Deliverable-Based Mastery:** Success is measured by the quality of the final output—a prototype, a policy brief, or a technical repository—rather than a standardized test .
* **Faculty Coaching:** Professors act as mentors, focusing on conceptual breakthroughs and navigating team dynamics rather than delivering lectures.

### Phase 3: The Portfolio & Signaling Build (Weeks 19–30)

The final phase focuses on converting the year's learning into legible signals for the labor market .

* **Evidence Layer Development:** Students compile their code, written analyses, and project results into a digital portfolio .
* **Micro-Credentialing:** Students earn stackable, blockchain-secured certifications in specific skills (e.g., "Data Visualization," "Intercultural Collaboration") earned during their challenge phase .
* **Learning Velocity Assessment:** Analytics from Phase 1 and 2 are used to create a profile of the student's *growth trajectory*—how fast they unlearned errors and adapted to new challenges .

### Core Structural Anchors

| **Feature** | **Implementation** |
| --- | --- |
| **Schedule** | Self-paced mastery tracks; students progress as they prove competence, not by the semester clock . |
| **Mentoring** | **Concurrent Collaboration**: Students meet regularly with both AI diagnostic agents and human character-building coaches . |
| **Equity** | **Bridge Programs**: Intensive support for first-generation students to develop academic confidence before Phase 2. |
| **Governance** | A "Living Board" of industry leaders and faculty that updates the "Challenge" list every six months . |

**Would you like to see a sample "Grading Rubric" for an AI-integrated interdisciplinary project?**