

MEMORANDUM

TO: Felix Ngassa, Chair of the Executive Committee of the University
Academic Senate

CC: Carol A. Griffin, Director, General Education Program

FROM: General Education Committee—Gabriele Gottlieb, Chair

DATE: April 9, 2018

SUBJECT: General Education Committee End-of-Year Report

The General Education Committee (GEC) met 24 times this semester on Mondays from 2:30-4:30 p.m., and can report progress in the following areas.

Curriculum: We received 52 course proposals and at this point have reviewed 50. Several courses were resubmitted after revisions. We approved 33 courses so far with 4 more courses awaiting approval. Another 4 courses were recently submitted and will be reviewed this semester if we have time. For the remaining 11 courses, the GE Committee requested revisions but so far they have not been resubmitted.

Assessment: During the fall semester, we reviewed 32 Course Assessment Reports (CARs) and, during the winter semester, we reviewed 51 CARs. The GEC composed feedback letters to each CAR, giving faculty and departments further insight into what portions of their response we valued most highly and what additional information or improvements we would like to see in the future. The dedication to high quality instruction by faculty was evident in the authors' thoughtful and in-depth reflections throughout the CAR reports. Only two of the CARs were deemed inadequate by the Committee and therefore they were sent back for revision.

Honors College: The GEC Chair and the GEC Director met with the interim director of Honors and unit head to discuss the place of Honors in the GE Program. After a lengthy discussion of potential changes forthcoming in the Honors Program, all present in the meeting agreed that the Honors Program should completely separate from the GE Program.

UAS charges 2017-2018

1. Review GE Foundations categories, and make recommendations for changes if/as warranted. Include thorough justifications for any proposed changes (Fall 2017 priority).

After careful review of peer institutions as well as select other universities in Michigan and a thorough discussion in the GEC over several meetings, members of the committee came to the conclusion that changes to the General Education Foundations are not warranted at this time. The committee members were involved in a lengthy discussion about the possible separate category for interdisciplinary courses but do not currently see how to do that in a credit-neutral way. The committee concluded this discussion during the Fall semester.

GEC decided to change the category World Perspectives to Global Perspectives to align GVSU language to that of peer institutions. In the process, we consulted those units that teach courses in World Perspectives to collect their feedback on the change. All the responses we received were positive and therefore we initiated the change, which goes into effect for 2018-19.

In response to discussions of the Assessment results (2013-2016) in the committee and in workshops (see Charge 3), we made some changes to the outcomes for Foundations-Historical Perspectives. Historical Perspectives went from three Knowledge SLOs to two as one seemed redundant and was also being addressed under Cultures. This change was done with the agreement of departments teaching in that Foundation. We further discussed whether it was necessary to develop a Creative Thinking rubric for Foundations: Arts but decided that the Critical Thinking rubric was sufficient to also address the assessment needs of courses in Arts. We also revised part of the Collaboration rubric as one sub-SLO did not align with its description.

2. Suggest Professional Development workshops and other resources for teaching online courses that FTLC or others might host for teaching General Education Skills.

The Provost's Office provided grants to any faculty member interested in developing a course online. The grant covered a \$500 professional development allocation as well as registration in Online Learning Consortium workshops and a book. There are currently eight faculty participating. We also have discussed other strategies such as a promotional video with faculty discussing online teaching and posting exemplary teaching strategies and best practices for online courses.

3. Continue to monitor and improve the General Education assessment process by, in part, including an analysis of the GEP Report in the GEC's EOY report.

During the fall and winter semester, the General Education Director offered 42 30-minute assessment workshops on both campuses and at varying days and times. These assessment training sessions did not require any registration and faculty could just drop into any of the workshops. These workshops continue to prove useful in addressing faculty's concerns about assessment and are frequently mentioned in CARs. The Director also conducted three one-on-one sessions for faculty who could not attend any of the other workshops.

Throughout the year the GE Committee spent a considerable amount of time discussing the results from the first assessment cycle (2013-2016). To disseminate the results of the first assessment cycle, we held a series of 21 workshops to discuss the assessment results for all Content and Skills SLOs. 11 workshops addressed Knowledge SLOs and 9 addressed Skills SLOs. Usually the GE Program Director C. "Griff" Griffin and one committee member were present to lead these workshops. Before the workshop, the committee as a whole discussed the assessment results for each Knowledge and Skill SLOs. Although attendance by faculty was minimal, the workshops were highly successful in discussing the teaching and assessing of SLOs. As a result, we revised the labeling of levels for assessing student learning during assessment. The discussion of assessment results with faculty in combination with reading CARs led the committee to revise and/or reformulate several Student Learning Outcomes and rubrics (see response to Charge 1).

The GE Program allows courses to double-dip between the Cultures and the Foundations or Issues. This created a challenge for assessing certain courses as they covered up to four Knowledge SLOs and up to five Skills SLOs. The GEC came up with a solution in that courses that have 4-5 Skills SLOs will assess only 2-3 each three-year cycle and alternate the SLOs from cycle to cycle (for example, they would assess the Global Perspectives in the first three-year cycle, and Foundation: Social Behavioral Sciences in the second three-year cycle). GEC thinks that this solution will help better manage the assessment workload for faculty and will maintain the reliability of the data associated with these courses.

To confirm the role of the GE Committee, the GE committee submitted a proposal for changes to the Faculty Handbook language in regards to the committee. These proposed changes reflect the work GEC is currently performing and added an appeals process for GEC curriculum decisions that was previously absent. These changes were approved by UAS in April.

The GE Committee also revised and approved its Principles of Assessment, which are posted on the GE website.

The GE Committee has discussed the need to develop “best practice” handouts for each Skills SLOs for faculty. The members of the committee agreed that this would further support faculty when assessing GE Knowledge and Skills SLOs. GEC will compose those handouts in the upcoming year and would like to see this aspect as one of the charges for next year. This will be a major undertaking.

4. Provide a report on the assessment of the General Education outcomes (identified as institution-level undergraduate outcomes) to UAC for review according to the assessment process outlined on the UAC website (www.gvsu.edu/uac).

The GEC chair and the GEC director met with the chair of UAC and a representative of the Office of the Provost to discuss this charge. One of the main issues is that the General Education Program is a university-wide program and therefore includes a wide variety of categories and departments, which will be difficult to fit into GVAssess. Furthermore, the General Education Program assesses its courses on a three-year cycle compared to a two-year cycle for individual departments. The GEC and UAC agreed that the GE Program will post regular reports in GVAssess but not fill in every course individually into the program.

5. In an effort to engage more faculty in our shared governance system, prepare a mid-year progress report at the end of the Fall semester to be posted on the GEC website and disseminated to ECS/UAS and College Deans (a full report is expected as usual at the end of the year).

The Mid-Year Report was posted on the GEC website.

Conclusion: The GEC would like to thank the GE Program Director C. “Griff” Griffin, the GE Office Coordinator Jen Cathey, Graduate Assistant Adam Heiss, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Ellen Schendel, UAS Vice Chair Shawn Bultsema, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Chris Plouff, the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center, the University Assessment Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, the College Curriculum Committees, and the University Academic Senate for supporting us in our efforts to ensure the implementation and quality of the General Education Program.

Gabriele Gottlieb – GEC Chair, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Brian Bowdle – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Hsaio-Ping Chen – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Dori Danko – Seidman College of Business
Dawn DeVries – College of Health Professions
Brian Drake – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Mark Gleason – College of Community & Public Service
Kim Lohr – Kirkhof College of Nursing (winter)
John Lurie – Student Senate
Kimberly McKee – Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies
Dennis Malaret – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Keith Oliver – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Linda Pickett – College of Education
Huihui Qi – Padnos College of Engineering
Peter Riemersma – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Lindy Scripps-Hoekstra – University Libraries
Susan Strouse – Kirkhof College of Nursing (fall)
Patrick Thorpe – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
David Vessey – College of Liberal Arts & Sciences