

General Education Oversight Committee

Report of Activities AY 2012–2013

Introduction

The General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) consisting of chairs and co-chairs of ten GEOC Subcommittees—Content Areas 1 (Arts & Humanities), 2 (Social Sciences), 3 (Science & Technology), 4 (Diversity and Multiculturalism/Intl); Competencies: W, Q, Second Language, Information Literacy, Computer Technology); and Assessment; and three ex-officio members (the directors of the W and Q Centers and a representative of the Senate C&CC), one of which has also served as subcommittee co-chair, continues to function well. The current general education program has been implemented for six years. A substantial number of general education course are in place and the total is approaching steady-state.

The general education program must remain rigorous and innovative, while incorporating changing pedagogy and uses of technology, and also continuing to adjust to the changing needs of students and society. Therefore, new or revised Gen Ed courses will be proposed for years to come while some of the current Gen Ed courses may rarely be offered or will be dropped from the Gen Ed program altogether.

Four courses that proposed to simultaneously meet the guidelines of multiple content areas* were awarded funding by the review committee for the Provost's General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition in 2011. However, none of the four courses awarded funding in the 2012 Provost's Competition were multiple content area courses.

Of the six courses awarding in 2011, three were offered in the 2012-2013 AY (two existing and one new). One of the courses not currently being offered has been passed through the GEOC and is in final stages of review with the Senate C&C Committee before it is sent to the University Senate.

Of the four courses awarded in 2012, three existing ones were offered in the 2012-2013 AY, while the one new proposal is currently being considered by the Senate C&C Committee.

The GEOC continues to review and approve new and revised general education courses, but its attention is increasingly devoted to developing tools to assess the effectiveness of the overall general education program, monitor its implementation, and insure that very high quality is maintained. This report summarizes both operations of the program and activities of the GEOC during the current academic year.

**NOTE: Multiple content area courses are those that include two or more content areas in 1 through 3; content area 4 does not count a course being considered "multiple content area."*

General Education Course Approvals

The general education curriculum continues to mature and now contains 351 content area courses (5 more than last year) and 508 skill code courses (14 more than last year). Growth in the total number of courses has increased slightly; additionally, a number of courses are revised every year. As of April in the AY 2012-2013, 38 proposals were received, resulting in the addition of 7 new courses to the curriculum; 5 existing courses being revised; and 1 course dropped from the curriculum. Twenty-five of the 38 proposals are still in the review process, many of them GEOC-approved courses that have not yet reached review by the Senate.

The breakdown of courses approved by the Senate by content area and competency is given in Table 1. Since some courses are included in more than one category, the totals are less than the sum of the individual categories.

Table 1. *Numbers of courses now approved for the general education curriculum (as of November 26, 2012 Senate meeting). The first three columns count each course listing, while the last three columns count cross-listed courses as one course.*

Content Area/Competency	1000-level courses	2000+level courses	Total # of courses	1000-level courses (noncross)	2000+level courses (noncross)	Total # courses (noncross)
CA1 Arts and Humanities	83	91	173	76	82	158
CA2 Social Sciences	49	16	65	48	15	63
CA3 Science and Technology	59	4	63	53	4	57
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism	76	130	206	67	98	165
*Total content area courses	200	201	400	184	167	351
Quantitative	45	33	78	45	33	78
Writing	26	426	452	26	406	432
Total skill courses **	71	457	528	71	437	508

* totals are less than the sum of content area courses as 107 [92-NC](1000-level= 67[60]; 2000+level=40 [32]) CA4 courses are also CA1, CA2 or CA3. There are 99 [73] (1000-level= 9 [7]; 2000+level= 90 [66]) CA4 courses that are ONLY CA4 or CA4INT.

** totals are less than the sum of skill courses as 2 (2000+level) courses are Q and W.

Overall total of courses in the GenEd curriculum are less than the sum of the CA/skill categories as many Content Area courses are also skill courses.

The GEOC also reviews proposals to offer existing General Education courses in intensive sessions (4 weeks or less). The breakdown of these reviews since 2005, including 2 submitted this year, is given in Table 2. Courses are approved either fully or provisionally, depending on the measure of assurance GEOC has that the Gen Ed objectives of a given course can be maintained in the shortened course format. GEOC has collected faculty reports on provisionally approved intersession courses offered more than 2 times in a condensed format and uses this information to determine whether a course should be re-categorized to “fully approved.”

Table 2. *General Education Courses Reviewed for Intensive Session Teaching 2005–2012*

Course disposition	
Approved	57
Provisionally approved	6
Rejected	8

General Education Program Implementation

The number of General Education course offerings on all UConn campuses declined at a very slow rate during the previous three years: 2,087 courses (1,034+1,053) in Fall and Spring 2008-09, 2,073 (1,015+1,058) in Fall and Spring 2009-10, and 2,030 (1,000+1,030) in Fall and Spring 2010-11. (see numbers at the bottom right in Tables 6a and 6b). However, this trend reversed during the past two years: 2,109 (1,042+1,067) in Fall and Spring 2011-12 and 2,264 (1,105+1,159) during Fall and Spring 2012-13. At the same time, the General Education courses that are taught are increasing in size. Tables 3 (F 2012) and 4 (S 2013) show the breakdown of course sections and enrollments by General Education category and campus. The individual sections counted in Tables 3, including subsections, indicate 5913 (3129+2784) course sections compared to 5,306 (2,744+2,562), (4,893 (2,528+2,365) and 4,715 (2,452 + 2,263) for the previous three years. Since some Gen Ed courses are included in more than one Content Area, the actual total of Content Area offerings is a bit lower

than the number shown in Tables 3 and 4. The same goes for the actual total of the overall Gen Ed offerings since some Content Area courses are also listed as W or Q courses.

Although the tables appear to show an annual total enrollment of 120,556 (63,035+57521), some of the courses and respective enrollment were counted for two Content Areas, if one was CA4, and also for a Competency (Q or W). The actual physical seats taken in AY 2012–13 were 93,547 (48,794 in Fall 2012 and 44,753 in Spring 2013) a 3.2% decrease over 2011-12. Overall, the capacity of offerings in all categories seems adequate to meet the needs of our undergraduate population (annual admissions of approximately 3,100+ students at the freshman level on the main campus).

Table 3. Fall 2012 General Education courses (Seminar/Lecture sections) offered [“Course”], subsections (Discussion/Lab sections) offered [“SubSec”] and enrollment (“EnrTot”) by campus and category. Total enrollment was calculated for Lecture/Seminar sections only and does not double-count enrollment for subsections. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted.

Note: Actual Physical Seats are 48,794. The higher 63,283 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses.

Campus	AVPT			HTFD			STMFD			STORR			TORR			WTBY			All Campuses		
GenEd category	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot
Arts and Hum	21	1	541	37		960	23	1	645	130	183	8,997	12		155	25	1	645	248	186	11,943
Social Sciences	24		626	31		1048	24		852	92	163	8,319	6		141	19		612	196	163	11,598
Sci and Tech	4		105	7	4	282	8		279	22	85	2824	1	1	33	4	2	208	46	92	3,731
Sci and Tech Lab	11	20	339	15	58	640	9	17	280	45	367	4964	3	4	77	7	13	283	90	479	6,583
Div and Multi	9	1	142	19		306	15		317	63	44	2561	10		133	9		189	125	45	3,648
Div and Multi Int	13		381	14		448	11		348	66	84	4854	4		65	9		262	117	84	6,358
Total CA	82	22	2134	123	62	3684	90	18	2721	418	926	32519	36	5	604	73	16	2199	822	1,049	43,861
Quantitative	21	13	520	34	49	1168	26	13	750	170	470	10,563	8	5	159	19	8	577	278	558	13,737
Writing 100 level	3		53	7		127	1		17	25	9	630	1		12	2		37	39	9	876
Writing 200 level	3		45	4	1	53	5	1	92	38	63	1218	2	1	27	4		64	56	66	1,499
Total Writing	11		163	20	1	293	19	1	312	243	109	4449	6	1	68	11		152	310	112	5,437
Total GenEd	114	35	2817	177	112	5145	135	32	3783	831	1505	47531	50	11	831	103	24	2928	1410	1719	63035

Table 4. Spring 2013 General Education courses (Seminar/Lecture sections) offered [“Course”], subsections (Discussion/Lab sections) offered [“SubSec”] and enrollment (“EnrTot”) by campus and category. Total enrollment was calculated for Lecture/Seminar sections only and does not double-count enrollment for subsections. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted.

Note: Actual Physical Seats are 44,753. The higher 57,521 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses.

Campus	AVPT			HTFD			STMFD			STORR			TORR			WTBY			All Campuses		
GenEd category	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot	Course	SubSec	EnrTot
Arts and Hum	17	1	423	35		884	21	1	639	130	164	8,347	10		180	22	1	542	235	167	11,015
Social Sciences	19		587	31		1028	21	1	725	80	170	7,932	6		121	20		626	177	171	11,019
Sci and Tech	5		148	7		270	5		169	22	28	2063	1		25	3		139	43	28	2,814
Sci and Tech Lab	8	13	244	11	24	502	10	13	261	44	302	4318	4	5	75	7	13	278	84	370	5,678
Div and Multi	6	1	140	14		346	11		264	59	47	2654	4		48	12		229	106	48	3,681
Div and Multi Int	9		256	14		416	12		380	57	52	4215	3		58	11		335	106	52	5,660
Total CA	64	15	1798	112	24	3446	80	15	2438	392	763	29529	28	5	507	75	14	2149	751	836	39,867
Quantitative	20		477	31	19	938	25	8	651	148	387	8,850	7	4	123	18	9	513	249	427	11,552
Writing 100 level	3		58	9		164	2		36	27	1	515	2		42	4		74	47	1	889
Writing 200 level	2		35	5	1	83	5	3	83	40	55	1309	0		0	6	1	82	58	60	1,592
Total Writing	8		115	24	1	364	21	3	323	364	72	4915	7		93	20	1	292	444	77	6,102
Total GenEd	92	15	2390	167	44	4748	126	26	3412	904	1222	43294	42	9	723	113	24	2954	1444	1340	57521

The enrollment data also allows the calculation of average enrollment in General Education courses in each category. The averages have barely changed since last year. In Table 5, only non-subsection portions of classes are counted as classes. Courses that were listed in the Schedule of Classes but then had zero enrollment are not counted. The average of 2000+ level W courses is distorted by the fact that independent study and senior thesis W courses (often having an enrollment of only 1–3 students as opposed to the usual enrollment of 19 per W section) are included in the course count. By contrast, the average class size of W courses at Storrs (and by extension all campus) is shown to exceed the 19 student limit because some W courses have enrollments of up to 344 students in their lecture/seminar sections; the students are then broken into discussion sections of 19 where they received their writing instruction. The exclusion of subsections (e.g. labs) also accounts for the large class size average in the CA3 courses. Traditionally, larger lectures are more likely to be found in Storrs than at the regional campuses. Enrollment statistics for each semester further indicate that W-sections tend to fill up to but rarely exceed the cap of 19 students. With very few exceptions, departments and instructors have respected this cap.

A continuing concern is whether enough seats in W classes are available for students to enroll in a “writing in the major” course and a second W class within eight semesters that may also include a semester abroad. There are a number of opinions but very few facts on this issue. The GEOC will attempt to work with the Office of Institutional Research and the Registrar over the summer to develop empirical evidence on this issue.

Table 5. Average class size for General Education classes, 2012-2013

Note: Individual subsections of courses (discussion sections, labs, etc.) are NOT counted as separate classes. Numbers reflect only credit-bearing portions of courses. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted. The average of 2000+ level W courses is distorted by the fact that independent study and senior theses W courses are included in the course count.

Campus	Storrs	All Regionals	All Campuses
GenEd category			
Arts and Hum	67	25	48
Social Sciences	94	32	61
Sci and Tech	111	37	74
Sci and Tech Lab	104	35	70
Div and Multi	43	19	32
Div and Multi Intl	74	29	54
Total Cont Area	77	28	53
Quantitative	61	28	48
Writing 1000-lev	22	18	20
Writing 2000+ lev	32	16	27
Total Writing	16	15	16
Total GenEd	52	27	42

Note: AY11–12 totals nearly the same as AY10–11 and AY09–10.

The Senate-approved General Education Guidelines recommend that most general education courses be taught by full-time faculty. In AY 2012–2013, this was true for approximately 49-52% (depending on the semester) of all Gen Ed courses (see Tables 6a and 6b). This is a comparable to last year (AY 2011-12) when 49–53% of courses were taught by full-time faculty, as well as AY 2010-11 (49-51%) , although less than AY 2009-10 (54-57%). Full-time faculty taught just under one-third of general education courses at the regional campuses and 61-63% of courses at the Storrs campus, up from 60% in Storrs last year. However, the category of full-time faculty includes non-tenured and non-tenure-track lecturers and Assistant Professors in Residence (APiRs). The latter are hired on contracts for up to three years and often report feeling overwhelmed by their teaching loads of seven courses per year. While adjunct instructors and GAs may be extremely competent teachers, they are

likely to be less integrated into the teaching mission of the institution and require and deserve support and supervision to ensure maintenance of teaching standards and fulfillment of courses goals.

Since class sizes and credit loads vary, it was also of interest to compare these teaching contributions on the basis of student credit hour production (Tables 7a and 7b). While this does not influence the data much at the regional campuses, the number of students taught by faculty at the Storrs campus rises significantly, because faculty tend to teach the larger classes. When all faculty ranks are considered, faculty teach more than two thirds of students' general education programs at Storrs (almost 72% in the Fall 2012).

Table 6a. *General Education classes by instructor rank at each campus Fall 2012 (% of total)*

Note: Only the credit bearing portion of courses is counted for the figures below.

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. faculty	Total Courses
Avery Point	17.6	0.0	5.9	2.4	25.9	57.6	9.4	7.1	74.1	85
Hartford	8.8	11.8	2.2	4.4	27.2	56.6	14.7	1.5	72.8	136
Stamford	7.7	25.0	7.7	1.0	41.3	51.0	6.7	1.0	58.7	104
Torrington	5.4	5.4	5.4	10.8	27.0	73.0	0.0	0.0	73.0	37
Waterbury	11.0	9.8	1.2	8.5	30.5	56.1	13.4	0.0	69.5	82
All Regionals (avg)	10.4	11.7	4.3	4.5	30.9	56.8	10.4	2.0	69.1	89
Storrs	21.3	16.5	18.6	4.7	61.1	13.3	22.8	2.7	38.9	661
All campuses	16.9	14.6	12.9	4.6	49.0	30.8	17.8	2.4	51.0	1105

Table 6b. *General Education classes by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2013 (% of total)*

Note: only the credit bearing portion of courses is counted for the figures below.

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. faculty	Total Courses
Avery Point	10.8	4.1	6.8	2.7	24.3	64.9	8.1	2.7	75.7	74
Hartford	7.2	5.6	4.0	3.2	20.0	62.4	16.8	0.8	80.0	125
Stamford	7.1	21.2	11.1	2.0	41.4	52.5	5.1	1.0	58.6	99
Torrington	12.5	3.1	3.1	15.6	34.4	65.6	0.0	0.0	65.6	32
Waterbury	18.1	9.6	2.4	9.6	39.8	48.2	12.0	0.0	60.2	83
All Regionals (avg)	10.4	9.7	5.8	5.1	31.0	57.9	10.2	1.0	69.0	83
Storrs	18.2	19.6	21.2	4.0	63.0	12.9	21.7	2.4	37.0	746
All campuses	15.4	16.0	15.7	4.4	51.6	28.9	17.6	1.9	48.4	1159

Table 7a. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Fall 2012 (% of total)*

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. fac.	Total Credit Hours
Avery Point	12.0	0.0	6.5	7.0	25.5	57.9	9.7	6.9	74.5	6624
Hartford	14.6	11.2	1.9	3.6	31.3	52.3	14.4	2.1	68.7	12,843
Stamford	9.4	24.2	8.8	1.1	43.5	48.5	7.1	0.8	56.5	9615
Torrington	3.3	10.3	3.9	9.2	26.7	73.3	0.0	0.0	73.3	1992
Waterbury	10.7	12.5	4.8	8.3	36.3	51.1	12.6	0.0	63.7	7595
All Regionals (avg)	11.5	12.7	5.1	4.8	34.1	53.2	10.7	2.1	65.9	7734
Storrs	28.7	14.9	19.7	8.6	71.9	14.3	11.0	2.8	28.1	118,961
All campuses	24.5	14.4	16.1	7.7	62.6	23.9	10.9	2.6	37.4	157,630

Table 7b. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2013 (% of total)*

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. faculty	Total Credit Hours
Avery Point	10.0	1.5	8.9	6.5	26.8	62.8	8.2	2.1	73.2	4445
Hartford	10.5	5.9	3.9	1.6	22.0	57.8	18.6	0.9	77.3	8991
Stamford	7.9	19.1	10.3	2.3	39.6	52.8	6.9	0.8	60.4	5192
Torrington	9.5	5.5	1.8	11.7	28.6	71.4	0.0	0.0	71.4	1280
Waterbury	16.2	12.1	4.4	10.2	42.8	46.2	11.0	0.0	57.2	4128
All Regionals (avg)	10.9	9.6	6.3	4.9	31.7	55.8	11.5	0.8	68.1	7062
Storrs	25.2	14.0	19.2	8.4	66.8	16.9	13.8	2.5	33.2	35,759
All campuses	21.7	12.9	16.0	7.5	58.2	26.5	13.2	2.1	41.8	59,795

General Education Course Substitutions

According to the General Education Guidelines, schools and colleges have the explicit authority to make substitutions to the requirements for individual students admitted to the respective school or college. The Registrar's office kindly supplies GEOC with a list of all substitutions made for enrolled students during the academic year. These numbers are relatively small (just over 200 in AY 2012-13) relative to the numbers of general education courses taken, and this number has still been declining (267 in AY 2011-11 and 317 in AY 2010-11). Some colleges did see slight increases, including 48 substitutions for AGNR, but many saw significant declines. ACES and CANR both declined by 100%, losing 4 and 51 substitutions respectively. CLAS declined about 35% from 124 to 80; CTED declined 62% from 26 to 10; and FNAR declined 57% from 21 to 9.

Table 8. *Substitutions to the General Education Requirements by School or College*

	# subs
ACES	0
AGNR	48
CANR	0
BUSN	23
CLAS	80
CTED	10
EDUC	9
EGBU	0
ENGR	17
FNAR	9
NURS	20
PHAR	3
Total	219

Note: All but the following schools saw a decrease in substitutions: AGNR, BUSN, ENGR, NURS and PHAR

Table 9. *Substitutions to the General Education Requirements by Category*

Category	Substitutions	Substitutions 2011-12
CA1	26	24
CA2	15	24
CA3	6	48*
CA3-LAB	26	
CA4	47	118*
CA4-INT	39	
Q	5	10
W	24	28
Second Language	28	15
Sub for ENGL 1010	2	
Total	219	267

*Includes both CA3/CA3-LAB and CA4/CA4-INT numbers respectively

Substitutions for transfer students at the time of admission for courses transferred in that are not a match of existing University of Connecticut courses are potentially a much larger number than the number processed for already enrolled students.

Another source of general education credits is through the Early College Experience program. These are University of Connecticut courses taught by high school teachers throughout the State under the supervision of University departments. Over eight thousand students are enrolled in Early College Experience courses, and a substantial fraction of those students will enroll at the University of Connecticut. A few students take as many as three semesters of University of Connecticut course credits while still in high school.

Because many Early College Experience courses also are general education courses, the GEOC chair accepted a position on the Early College Experience Program advisory board. The numbers provided below by ECE are the cohort of students who were part of UConn ECE Fall 2011-Spring 2012 and matriculated to UConn Fall 2012. For that reason it is almost certain that these numbers are below the actual numbers of GEOC seats successfully taken.

Table 10. *ECE transfers into General Education Requirements by Category - Fall 2012*

Category	Substitutions granted
CA1	200
CA2	147
CA3	87
CA3-Lab	458
CA4	8
CA4-Intl	15
Content Area Total	915
Q	810
W	26
Competency Total	836
Grand Total	1,751

The GEOC and the Early College Experience Program Advisory Board also plan to work with the Office of Institutional Research to evaluate how well students who meet general education competency course requirements while in high school do in more advanced courses taken after matriculation at the University compared to students whose requisite courses are taken on University of Connecticut campuses.

Provost's General Education Course Competition

The annual General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition is designed to promote the ongoing enhancement, innovation, improvement, and academic rigor of the content and teaching of UConn's General Education curriculum. Since 2004, this grant program has tremendously enriched UConn's General Education program and simultaneously the overall undergraduate program.

In Spring 2012, the Provost's General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition was held for the ninth time. A total of seven proposals were received and four of those were funded (two fewer than in 2011 year).

The number of successful proposals for the Provost's General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition has declined in recent years. So, this spring the GEOC voted to review the goals and implementation of the competition and defer the next competition until Fall 2013.

The primary objective of the Provost's Competition is improvement in the quality of general education. While the competition will continue to encourage innovative new course proposals, especially cross-disciplinary proposals that span multiple content areas, the GEOC proposes a new emphasis on improving the quality of large enrollment general education courses, especially those that include many sections.

The GEOC proposes that the maximum grant available for a successful proposal be raised to \$15,000 from the \$10,000 that has not been augmented since the inception of competition. The GEOC also believes that, given the number of proposals submitted in recent years, it may make sense to hold the competition every two years instead of annually.

Table 11. 2012 Courses developed through the **support of the Provost's Competition** by Gen Ed category

Category	Grants Funded 2004-2011	2012 Winners
CA1	30	
CA2	17	
CA3	11	3
CA4	36	
Q	9	1
W	19	
Sec Lang	1	
Totals	76	4

Note: the "Totals" row figures represent individual grant projects funded. These totals are less than the sum of each category as many courses have multiple gen ed attributes.

Oversight

Part of GEOC's mandate from the Senate is "monitoring periodically courses that satisfy General Education requirements to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria adopted by the Senate" (*General Education Guidelines*). As reported last year: "GEOC has developed a smaller-scale recertification plan and opted for a staggered and sample approach that would still allow monitoring the quality of the Gen Ed program and help stimulate departmental conversations about the purpose and quality of their Gen Ed offerings. Thus, a sampling of courses - rather than all Gen Ed courses - will need to be recertified in an overall recertification process that is spread over a five-year cycle."

This year, the GEOC intended to implement this plan. However, the promotion of GEOC's administrator and the search for a replacement has delayed this project until Fall 2013.

The Assessment Subcommittee has noted that “monitoring the quality” of courses is closely linked to assessment, and that what the proposed survey instrument is designed to do is inquire whether a course, as taught, is aligned with (that is corresponds to) the course objectives and general education guidelines it proposed to deliver when it was approved. The plan is to obtain information about the delivery of content area and competency course categories rather than to reapprove (or not) the general education offering status of individual courses. Hence, the term “recertification” is not an accurate description of what is proposed. Therefore, this monitoring program has been renamed the alignment survey.

In parallel with the plan to gather data on how courses are being taught, the GEOC continues the ongoing effort to develop assessment tools designed to reveal whether what students learn from the courses they select achieves goals that are the purpose of general education.

Alignment Survey

The GEOC contracted with University Information Technology Services to develop a flexible online survey to gather information about sampled courses. The survey asks open-ended questions about the relationship between the course content and delivery and both the overall general education guidelines and also the specific guidelines for the content areas and competencies that a course is approved for. The survey also includes the current draft of learning outcomes (that continue to be refined) for the content areas and asks whether the course contains any exam questions, projects, or written assignments intended to measure whether students have achieved these outcomes. The current survey does not ask for the results of general education measures; it only asks whether some form of measurement is attempted. In 2011, GEOC conducted a pilot survey with three departments. After the pilot, the survey was revised and is ready for a regular program of surveys beginning next fall.

Between 12 and 17 departments that offer general education courses will be selected each year to participate in the general education alignment survey. A sample of courses offered by each participating department will be selected to include:

- The general education course with the largest enrollment
- At least one example of each content area and competency offered
- At least one example of a course offered at a regional campus

Random sampling will be used for content areas and competencies that are represented in multiple courses offered by the department (two courses will be sampled and the department will be asked to choose one of the two). We also will be asking departments separately to review their information literacy offerings. Information literacy is an important component of general education, but it generally is not associated with a single departmental course and often is incorporated into courses that are not otherwise identified with general education.

The cumulative data gathered from departmental samples will permit the GEOC to report on the extent to which general education courses collectively continue to be consistent with the guidelines that were the basis for their approval as general education offerings. Courses approved for content area one, Arts and Humanities, and content area four, Multiculturalism and Diversity both require satisfying one of five possible guidelines. Once enough departments have been surveyed, it will be possible to report what fractions of courses in these content areas focus on each of the possible guidelines.

The survey is oriented toward evaluating content areas and competencies, and a question of interest is this: “To what extent does the teaching of general education courses, especially those approved several years ago, continue to conform to the description and justification in the approved course action request?” Should the survey reveal that a surveyed course is diverging from the general education guidelines, the GEOC will work with the department and faculty to restore the course to the proper alignment. Nevertheless, the implications of

this question are large. If it appears that a large fraction of general education courses have diverged from the guidelines, then the process of reviewing general education courses, the resources devoted to oversight, and possibly the structure of the general education program itself would have to be reconsidered.

Assessment

Efforts continue to develop methods to measure general education learning outcomes specific to the intent of content area and competency courses. Content area one has not progressed as far as the other three. Last year the CA1 co-chairs conducted interviews with instructors of a range of arts and humanities courses similar to the interviews previously conducted for the other content areas, and completed the first stage of specifying learning outcomes. This year a similar interviewing process is being applied to assess a number of liberal arts and humanities courses taken by students in a variety of majors to determine how and where they addressed these CA1 learning outcomes in their courses and the extent to which they assess whether students achieve these objectives.

This year the GEOC took a pause in assessing writing competency at the department level. We expect to resume that effort in the summer of 2014. During last year and this, the quantitative competency committee reviewed a Web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system known as ALEKS. ALEKS is a promising tool for verifying students' preparation for calculus courses and providing some remedial support for students who are weak in some mathematical skills required for success in calculus courses. ALEKS is being implemented by the MATH Department and potentially can make our offerings of quantitative courses more cost effective and may have some capacity for assessing achievement of quantitative competency.

Once a number of faculty are using assessment tools in general education courses, the GEOC will offer workshops to gauge how these efforts are working and how much confidence there is that the assessment measures represent learning outcomes that are aligned with general education guidelines. The GEOC will then be in a position to ascertain whether general education is succeeding as envisioned and what adjustments in the program might be warranted.

GEOC Committee Members 2012–2013 Academic Year

Murphy Sewall, Chair ('13)	MKTG
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John Ayers (Fall '12)	ECE
Rosa Helena Chinchilla ('13)	MCL
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Francoise Dussart ('14)	ANTH
Kailee Himes (Undergraduate Representative)	CLAS
Richard Jones ('14)	PHYS
Peter Kaminsky ('14)	MUSC
Nicholas Leadbeater ('14)	CHEM
Thomas Long ('14)	NURS
Wally Madych ('14)	MATH
Thomas Meyer ('14)	NRE
Laurent Michel ('14)	CSE
Stephanie Milan ('14)	PSYC
Olivier Morand ('14)	ECON
Gustavo Nanclares ('14)	MCL
Linda Neelly ('14)	NEAG/MUSI
Xae Alicia Reyes ('13)	EDCI
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Eric Schultz (Senate C&CC, ex officio- Fall 2011)	EEB
Noah Sharpsteen (Graduate Representative)	COGS
Sarah Winter ('13)	ENGL
Michael F. Young ('13)	EPSY
Anabel Perez (Administrator – Fall)	
Karen Piantek (Administrator – Spring)	

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Francoise Dussart, Co-Chair
Gustavo Nanclares
Jonathan Hufstader

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Olivier Morand, Co-Chair
David Atkin
Linda Lee
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Science and Technology

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Thomas Meyer, Co-Chair
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Xae Alicia Reyes, Co-Chair
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James Cole
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Writing

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