

General Education Oversight Committee

Report of Activities July 2005- June 2006

Introduction

This year has seen GEOC move from a body concerned with defining the guidelines of the new general education system and populating it with courses to one that oversaw the birth of that system and made the first moves to monitor its operation. The year began with General Education Month and ended with significant steps towards describing the curriculum in a way that will allow the evaluation of the extent to which it is meeting its goals.

Course Approvals

The GEOC continued the process of reviewing proposals for adding courses to the General Education curriculum. One hundred and nine such proposals were reviewed, resulting in the addition of 81 courses to the curriculum. This has resulted in a curriculum that contains 243 content area courses and 404 skill code courses. The breakdown of these total figures 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

Content Area/Competency	100 level courses	200 level courses	Total number of courses
Arts and Humanities	63	42	105
Social Sciences	36	4	40
Science and Technology	45	2	47
Diversity and Multiculturalism	51	65	116
Total content area	151	92	243
Quantitative	45	33	78
Writing	24	304	328
Total	176	426	601

In addition to these new course reviews, the GEOC reviewed 42 proposals to offer existing general education courses in intensive sessions. This process proved difficult, since reliable judgment about the effectiveness of compressed teaching of courses is dependent on the articulation of learning outcomes for those courses and the general education category(s) that contains them, and then the development of evaluation tools to determine whether the courses are effective at meeting those outcomes. As that system is developed, GEOC decided to grant two levels of approval for intersession general education courses. Full approval was granted when GEOC and its relevant subcommittees were reasonably confident about the effectiveness of intensive offering of a course. When more doubt existed, only provisional approval for a single offering of the course was granted, with the requirement that further information would be supplied after the course had been taught. The disposition of courses is shown in Table 2. The courses that were not approved for intensive teaching were all W courses. It should be noted that some departments made it clear that they did not wish to offer all or some of their

courses in intensive sessions, resulting in the withdrawal of some courses from those that had been offered prior to GEOC becoming involved in this issue.

Table 2. Outcome of review of general education courses for intensive session teaching.

Course disposition	
Approved	24
Provisionally approved	14
Rejected	4

Operation of system

Approaching one thousand separate sections of general education courses were offered each semester of the first year of operation of the new program. Breakdown of those courses for each semester by general education category and campus is shown in tables 3 and 4. It is interesting to note that many more seats were filled in CA 1 and 2 courses than in CA 3 and 4, particularly in the Spring semester. The capacity of all the content areas appears more than adequate to meet the needs of the undergraduate student population (approximately 5000 students per class), though many students may end up taking two international courses in the diversity and multiculturalism area. The enrollment capacity within W courses is marginal at best and clearly inadequate at the 100-level (1805 seats per year). The extent of this shortfall is difficult to gauge, since it is not clear how many of the 200-level W courses are generally available and also how many programs offer two W courses for their students. The GEOC will be surveying departments in the fall to gather this information. In any event, it is clear that W courses are not generally available to second year students, resulting in a gap in writing instruction following ENGL 110/111.

Table 3. General education courses offered (C) and enrollment (E) by campus and category. Fall 2005

Campus	Avery Point		Hartford		Stamford		Storrs		Torrington		Waterbury		All campuses	
	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
GenEd category	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
Arts and Hum	18	445	23	722	21	615	121	8269	6	90	24	678	213	10819
Social Sciences	14	375	24	881	21	634	111	8724	7	159	16	534	193	11307
Sci and Tech	6	202	6	213	4	162	23	2658	1	49	3	160	43	3444
Sci and Tech Lab	9	237	8	353	9	201	37	4506	4	54	5	237	72	5588
Div and Multi	4	83	5	129	3	62	68	1958	3	47			83	2279
Div and Multi Int	6	173	8	324	6	201	58	4678	3	77	7	215	88	5668
Total Cont Area	43	1313	64	2259	57	1655	326	25121	21	399	49	1623	560	32370
Quantitative	19	405	21	652	17	441	189	9217	8	153	17	503	271	11371
Writing 100 level	5	75	7	131	7	126	22	415			1	13	42	760
Writing 200 level	8	102	5	84	9	146	184	3369	4	61	9	126	219	3888
Total Writing	13	177	12	215	16	272	206	3784	4	61	10	139	261	4648
Total GenEd	70	1667	85	2850	83	2242	627	34147	29	558	72	2122	966	43586

Table 4. General education courses offered (C) and enrollment (E) by campus and category. Spring 2006

Campus	Avery Point		Hartford		Stamford		Storrs		Torrington		Waterbury		All campuses	
	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
GenEd category	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
Arts and Hum	14	378	26	686	23	569	132	8181	10	155	21	570	226	10539
Social Sciences	14	440	24	827	22	599	107	8227	5	107	13	480	185	10680
Sci and Tech	4	92	4	141	1	44	22	1946	2	37	1	50	34	2310
Sci and Tech Lab	8	189	9	312	10	217	39	3771	3	166	6	157	75	4812
Div and Multi	4	87	3	83	5	82	56	1586	4	44	4	93	76	1975
Div and Multi Int	4	126	9	324	10	266	62	4832	2	49	6	157	93	5754
Total Cont Area	43	1139	66	2026	61	1508	323	23118	23	388	44	1318	559	39324
Quantitative	19	337	24	685	21	479	154	7664	7	103	18	429	243	9697
Writing 100 level	4	69	8	142	8	151	23	560	2	29	5	94	50	1045
Writing 200 level	9	92	10	147	16	204	234	3639	2	30	6	94	277	4206
Total Writing	13	161	18	189	24	355	257	4199	4	59	11	198	327	5161
Total GenEd	65	1436	92	2627	89	2053	641	31189	29	479	64	1757	980	39541

The Senate General Education Guidelines encourage the teaching of courses by regular faculty. Table 5 shows that tenure track faculty teach about 40% of all general education classes. Adjunct instructors (primarily at the regional campuses) and GAs (primarily at Storrs) combine to teach 48.5% of classes. Faculty in residence, other professionals and individuals in a series of miscellaneous ranks teach the balance. 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.

Table 5. General education classes by instructor rank at each campus (% of total)

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Fac in res	Adjunct	GA	Misc	Total
Avery Point	8.1	11.9	8.1	3.7	56.3	8.9	3.0	135
Hartford	8.5	13.6	13.0	2.3	54.8	7.9		177
Stamford	4.7	27.3	7.6	2.9	53.5	2.9	1.2	172
Storrs	8.7	13.9	20.8	7.3	13.5	28.8	6.9	1273
Torrington	6.9	1.7		5.2	74.1	5.2	6.9	58
Waterbury	17.6	21.3	4.4	2.2	33.1	15.4	5.9	136
All regionals	9.1	17.3	7.8	2.9	52.1	8.1	2.7	678
All campuses	8.9	15.1	16.3	5.8	26.9	21.6	5.4	1951

General Education Month

The President and Provost designated September 2005 as General Education Month, to celebrate and draw attention to the new general education curriculum. Over 30 events were scheduled, including lectures, workshops, movies and exhibits, mostly in conjunction with other campus units. Andrea Leskes, Vice-President for Education and Quality Initiatives at the Association of American Colleges and Universities met with a series of groups on campus and gave an address entitled “General Education: Shifting the Paradigm from Teaching to Learning.” “Crash” was shown to sold-out houses in the student union theater, followed by productive discussions about diversity and oppression issues in FYE classes. Other notable events included coupled lectures on “Einstein for Beginners” and “Einstein,

Ethics and the Atomic Bomb”, workshops on infusing diversity into the curriculum and teaching writing and quantitative skills and a reception and poster display for winners of the Provost’s General Education Course Development Grant Competition.

Substitutions

Under a modification made to the General Education Guidelines in 2004, schools and colleges were given the explicit authority to make substitutions to the requirements for individual students. They were also required to make an annual report to the GEOC on the substitutions made, to ensure uniform interpretation of the guidelines across different academic units. The registrar’s office was able to furnish GEOC with a list of all substitutions made and then follow-up meetings were held with the responsible individuals at the school/college level. A total of 708 substitutions were made in the first year of operation of the new General Education requirements (Table 6). Relative to student numbers, these substitutions were made disproportionately by the College of Continuing Studies (CTED) and, to a lesser extent by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR). Much of this reflects the transfer student populations served by these units, compounded by the limited availability of general education offerings at the 200 level at the regional campuses (see Regional Campus Issues, below).

Table 6. Substitutions to the General Education Requirements by School and College

School/college	Substitutions granted
ACES	12
CANR	98
BUSN	34
CLAS	176
CTED	263
EDUC	18
ENGR	57
FAMS	2
FNAR	11
NURS	15
PHAR	22
Total	708

Approaching half of all substitutions were made to the CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism requirement (Table 7). This may not be unexpected, given the newness of this category, but will be of concern if it persists. It is more difficult to judge the appropriateness of a substitution for this content area and so students may be missing out on this important part of their general education.

It is interesting to note that the fewest substitutions were made for the Q and Second Language requirements. A draft policy to govern substitutions in these areas was developed by a committee chaired by the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education. The GEOC considered these policies and then met with representatives of the committee to offer suggestions for modification. While these policies have yet to be finalized, they do offer clearer direction about the use of substitutions than for other categories. It is clear that the advising staff appreciate clear policy with regard to substitutions to guide their decision-making and would like to see the adoption of the draft policy for Q and Second Language and their extension to other general education categories.

Category	Substitutions granted
CA1	57
CA2	48
CA3	117
CA4	310
Q	16
W	115
Second language	12
Six areas for CA1-3	33
Total	708

Regional campus issues

The GEOC considered a number of topics related to the regional campuses. Upon review of the substitution lists described above, it became clear that the College of Continuing Studies was giving more substitutions than other schools and colleges. That unit had developed an internal list of approved general education course substitutes, based on past practice and availability at the regional campuses. BGS students want to take as many courses as possible, including any remaining general education requirements, at the 200 level. They also often seek course offerings at restricted times not conflicting with their work schedule. When the general education curriculum was being developed, departments were encouraged to submit 100-level courses that would be accessible to first and second year students. Inclusion of more 200-level courses is desirable, provided they meet the criteria, both for the content area in question and the general education program as a whole.

Another area of concern was the extent to which adjunct instructors at the regional campuses were receiving appropriate support and supervision for their teaching function. Frequently, adjuncts may be unaware of how the course they have been hired to teach fits into the general education curriculum. Edited versions of the curriculum action request forms that were originally used to justify courses for particular general education content areas have now been posted to the GEOC website. Similar forms for all W courses will be added to that site this summer.

Provost's competition

This spring saw the third offering of the Provost's General Education Course Development Grant Competition. This program has proved popular among faculty and successful at introducing new and interesting courses to the curriculum. Nineteen proposals were received for the latest round and 13 were funded, at least in part. This year, rather than fund all approved proposals at the set rate of \$8,000 over two years, faculty were asked to provide a budget laying out the amount that was needed, up to a maximum of \$10,000. This allowed for smaller proposals, perhaps for revision of existing general education courses, and also dealt with this issue of unbudgeted fringe benefit costs that was encountered in previous iterations of the program.

ITL ran a well-received workshop for the recipients of the second group of awards, as they prepare for the first offering of their courses next year. Final evaluations have been sent to the first group of awardees, who, for the most part, have now taught their courses at least once. The distribution of courses across the general education curriculum developed from the first two years of the Provost's competition is shown in Table 8. In addition to the 26 courses shown here, three others have yet to be approved for general education. One recipient moved away from the University and the grant support

was withdrawn. Of the 9 W courses, 6 are at the 100-level, which should help to increase capacity in that needed area.

Table 8. Courses developed through the support of the Provost's competition by general education category

Category	Number of courses
CA1	9
CA2	3
CA3	4
CA4	16
Q	3
W	9
Total	26

Oversight

Up until this year, the GEOC has focused on the establishment of a general education system, but now that the system is up and running, the focus is shifting to oversight. Previous sections of this report have already dealt with this issue, for example Substitutions and Regional Campus issues, but the GEOC has also discussed a systematic approach to its oversight role. Given the capacity and resource issues surrounding W courses, it was decided to make this category the first to be examined. Meetings were held with the CLAS department heads and undergraduate council to reiterate the W requirements and to determine what concerns existed in this area. A survey has been developed to collect information about departmental practices with regard to their W courses and the approaches they have taken to meet the advanced writing in the major requirement. This will enable best practices to be shared and problem areas to be identified.

The Information Literacy subcommittee completed a review of all the departmental Advanced Informational Literacy Plans for their majors. These plans are approved at the school/college level and then forwarded to GEOC for informational purposes, rather than approval. Of the 69 plans received, approximately one third were considered good, one third acceptable and one third in need of revision. Many of these plans were submitted in haste at a time when considerable demands were being made on departments to establish the new general education program. Therefore a message was sent back to departments requesting that they revisit their information literacy plans to describe more completely how the ACRL requirements would be refined to meet the needs of their majors.

Assessment

Determination of how to evaluate the success of the general education program occupied a significant portion of the GEOC's attention this past year. Overall, the discussions were framed around how to move from a context in which the system is described largely in terms of what courses should teach to one described in terms of what students should learn. This is a prerequisite for evaluation efforts. A new GEOC Evaluation Subcommittee was formed to guide the GEOC's work in this area, which included the University's assessment coordinators and instructional design and evaluation experts. Representatives from this group met with the content area subcommittees to assist them with the task of re-describing the content areas in terms of student learning outcomes. The Social Science and Science and Technology subcommittees both produced draft reports outlining learning outcomes for their areas that will be shared with relevant faculty and departments in the fall. Both subcommittees expressed concerns in their reports about whether sufficient resources would be devoted to allow

meaningful evaluation efforts to occur and also how the process would be controlled and uses to which data would be put. The Arts and Humanities subcommittee has a particularly difficult task given the breadth of their area. The current requirements say that courses in this category must be directed towards just one of five potential goals, indicating that individual courses cannot be expected to address all learning outcomes developed for this area. As a first step, a curriculum map of CA1 courses is being developed that examines which courses claim to address each of the five potential goals.

The Information Literacy subcommittee is further advanced along the evaluation pathway since that subcommittee originally described the competency in terms of student learning outcomes, based on work from the Association of College and Research Libraries. Given the consistency of our competency with the national standards, suitable evaluation instruments are also available. One of these, SAILS, was pilot tested on UConn students in 2004 and appears appropriate for use here. An institutional license is available at an annual cost of \$2,000 and will be purchased to allow the assessment of information literacy skills starting in the next academic year.

Meetings

Hedley Freake, John Bennett and Manuela Wagner from GEOC, in addition to Eric Soulsby, attended the AACU *General Education and Outcomes That Matter in a Changing World* conference in Phoenix in March. This meeting represents a useful opportunity for solidifying and extending thinking about general education and for examining approaches other institutions are taking to evaluation issues. In addition, this meeting had a global education focus, quite relevant for efforts to develop global learning in UConn's undergraduate students. A set of notes from that meeting is available separately.

Staffing

Anabel Perez was hired in July to be the first permanent staff person for GEOC. She splits her time 50:50 between GEOC and the Individualized Major/Interdisciplinary Studies program. This split might be more challenging for less able individuals, but Ms Perez appears to enjoy the multiple challenges and has been able to meet the demands of both positions. In addition, consistent with the Senate requirements, the GEOC chair is now recognized as a 50% position. This has the advantage of retaining an active faculty member in this role, which, when combined with the GEOC structure, gives clear faculty control over this important part of the curriculum. Since the chair serves for a three-year term (one year now remaining) it will be important to identify a successor soon to enable a smooth transition.

GEOC Committee Members 2005-2006 Academic Year

Hedley Freake, Chair ('07)	NUSC
John Bennett ('06)	ME
Marie Cantino ('06)	PNB
Anne D'Alleva ('06)	FINA
Michael Darre ('07)	ANSC
Arnold Dashefsky ('06)	SOCI
Thomas Deans (Writing Center Director)	ENGL
Thomas DeFranco ('06)	NEAG
Clare Eby ('06)	ENGL
Peter Gogarten ('06)	MCB
Phillip Gould ('06)	PHYS
Dean Hanink ('06)	GEOG
Robert Jeffers (Senate Curricula and Courses Committee)	ME
William Lott (06)	ECON
Deborah McDonald ('07)	NURS
Felicia Pratto (07)	PSYC
Thomas Recchio ('07)	ENGL
Thomas Roby (Q Center Director)	MATH
Lisa Sanchez ('06)	ENGL
John Troyer (07)	PHIL
Manuela Wagner (06)	MCL
Hannah Adams (Undergraduate Student Rep)	
Jill Magee (Graduate Student Rep)	

Anabel Perez (Administrative support)

GEOC Subcommittee Members 2005-2006 Academic Year

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John Troyer
Ed Benson
Roger Travis
Jenny Commerford (Student)

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Gaye Tuchman
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Mark Sullivan
Jane Goldman
Caroline Bolton (Student)

Science and Technology

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Philip Gould
Elizabeth Hart
Tyson Miller
Tom Meyer
John Ayers
Robert Slattery (Student)

Diversity and Multiculturalism

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Alexinia Baldwin
Morty Ortega
Anke Finger
Elizabeth Ciurylo (Student)
Alan Wong (Student)

Computer Technology

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Michael Darre
Kim Chambers
Murphy Sewall
Andrew Marone (Student)

Information Literacy

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John Bennett
Francine DeFranco
David Lavoie
Letitia Naigles
Carolyn Lin
Andrew Garibay (Student)

Second Language

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Manuela Wagner
Rajeev Bansal
Kenneth Fuchsman
Catherine Jarvis-Ross
Barbara Lindsey

Quantitative

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Peter Gogarten
Thomas Roby
Marty Wood
David Gross
Doug Pease
Jeffrey Rummel

Writing

Thomas Recchio
Thomas Deans
Janice Clark
John DeWolf
Steve Zinn
Vanessa DiPilato (Student)

Evaluation

Hedley Freake
Tom Deans
Felicia Pratto
Eric Soulsby
David Yalof
Daniel Mercier/
Desmond McCaffrey
Scott Brown