General Education Oversight Committee
Report of Activities AY 2014-15

Introduction

General Education (Gen Ed) continues to thrive at UConn. Through its work with faculty and review of courses, it is clear that we value General Education and that most departments and programs value and support our current goals and approach to Gen Ed. There is some impetus for change and updating of Gen Ed competencies and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has tasked the Courses and Curriculum committee with a review of the Gen Ed structure, starting Fall 2015.

The General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) is tasked with oversight of Gen Ed at UConn. GEOC consists of chairs and co-chairs of ten GEOC Subcommittees, drawn from content areas across the University—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 one ex–officio member (a representative of the Senate C&CC). Details are given on our website at http://geoc.uconn.edu/. This report summarizes both operations of the program and activities of the GEOC during the current academic year.

The current configuration of Gen Ed courses dates back to the Taskforce on General Education Report of 2000. In 2004, UConn completed a transformative, faculty-led general education initiative aimed at creating a strong undergraduate curriculum across all majors. As a result, UConn has implemented robust curricular changes and maintained two faculty-led centers (W and Q) to support student and faculty development in areas identified as particularly crucial to the success of general education monitored by GEOC. A substantial number of Gen Ed courses are in place and the total number of courses remains relatively consistent across the last few years. Since the 2004 revisions have been implemented, the Gen Ed program has seen substantial success and widespread acceptance, but now faces several challenges associated with the continued growth and change within and outside the University. GEOC has undertaken revisions of the Computer competency and Information Literacy competency, but broader updates may be of value.

The 2014-15 General Education Oversight Committee herein reports on the following activities:

- New Course approvals 2014-2015
- Gen Ed Status Report
- Concerns with First Year Writing waivers
- Course Realignment Process (year 2 of 5 in the cycle)
- Course Enhancement Grant (Provost's) Competition
- Information Literacy Competency Review
- W Course "Quarantine" policy
- Civility as a Gen Ed Competency

New General Education Course Approvals 2014-2015

The general education curriculum continues to mature and now contains 367 content area courses (8 more since last year) and 536 skill code courses (15 more since last year). (Note: The figures count cross-listed courses as one course). As of March in the AY 2014-2015, 83 proposals were received (10 more than last year), resulting in the addition of 19 new courses to the curriculum; 20 existing courses being revised; 2 courses approved for intersession offering; and 3 courses dropped from the curriculum. Thirty-nine of the 83 proposals are still in the review process, many of them GEOC-approved courses that had not yet completed review by the Senate as of the end of March.

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.

The courses added in each Content Area and Competency this year were as follows:

CA1 Arts and Humanities: 8
CA2 Social Sciences: 1
CA3 Science and Technology: 2
CA3-LAB Science and Technology: 0
CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism: 5
CA4-INT Diversity and Multiculturalism: 2
Q Quantitative: 0
W Writing: 24

Table 1. *Numbers of courses now approved for the general education curriculum (as of March 2, 2015 Senate meeting).*

Content Area/Competency	1000-level courses 2014-15	2000+level courses 2014-15	Total # of courses 2014-15	1000-level courses 2013-14	2000+level courses 2013-14	Total # of courses 2013-14
CA1 Arts and Humanities	101	84	185	85	91	176
CA2 Social Sciences	46	18	64	50	16	66
CA3 Science and Technology	60	7	67	61	4	65
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism	77	139	216	78	133	211
*Total content area courses	**284**	**248**	**532**	**205**	**204**	**409**
Quantitative	45	35	80	45	34	79
Writing	28	452	480	26	427	463
Total skill courses **	**73**	**487**	**560**	**71**	**459**	**542**

* totals are less than the sum of content area courses as some CA4 courses are also CA1, CA2 or CA3.
** totals are less than the sum of skill courses as some courses are both Q and W.
NOTE: Overall total of courses in the Gen Ed curriculum are less than the sum of the CA/skill categories as many Content Area courses are also skill courses.

The GEOC 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 collects faculty reports on provisionally approved intersession courses offered more than two times in a condensed format and uses this information to determine whether a course should be re-categorized to "fully approved." Over the past two years, the GEOC seems less inclined to issue provisional approvals but has instead opted for full approvals in all cases.

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

Course disposition	2014-15	2013-14	Total 2005-15
Approved	2	5	67
Provisionally approved	0	0	6*
Rejected	0	0	8

*Note: 1 course has since been granted full approval. 5 courses remain on the Provisional list.

General Education Status Report

Historically, the number of General Education course offerings on all UConn campuses was declinging at a very slow rate from 2008 to 2011, but this trend had reversed between 2011 to 2014: 2,109 (1,042+1,067) in AY 2011-12; 2,264 (1,105+1,159) in AY 2012-13; 2,268 (1,125+1,143) in AY 2013-14. In the current AY 2014-15, the increasing trend returned to a slight decline with a 99-section drop to 2169 (1086+1083). Enrollment also appears to have declined and is at 92,866 (48,766+44,100) this year, down 264 seats from last year's count of 93,130 in AY 2013-14 [48,579 in Fall 2013 and 44,551 in Spring 2014]. The total from the previous year was 93,547 in AY 2012-2013 [48,794 in Fall 2012 and 44,753 in Spring 2013]. Tables 3 (F 2014) and 4 (S 2015) show the breakdown of course sections and enrollments by General Education category and campus, and Table 5 shows the average class sizes across content areas and competencies.

Since some Gen Ed courses are included in more than one Content Area, the "Actual totals" of Content Area offerings is a bit lower than the "Total GenEd" numbers shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Fall 2014 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 48,766 (up 187 from 2013-14). The higher 64,726 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses (up 2316 from 2013-14).

Table 3 - Fall 2014																					
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
CA1 Arts and Hum	21	1	474	41	0	902	27	1	779	137	160	8,268	9	0	113	22	0	541	257	162	11,077
CA2 Social Sciences	20	0	533	32	0	1043	25	0	852	93	169	9,015	5	0	90	19	0	567	194	169	12,100
CA3 Sci and Tech	4	0	139	6	0	237	10	0	317	23	83	2882	1	0	23	4	2	205	48	85	3,803
CA3 Sci and Tech Lab	10	21	340	17	30	542	9	15	308	42	453	7417	4	5	67	5	11	229	87	535	8,903
CA4 Div and Multi	11	1	157	16	0	286	12	0	243	68	32	2328	8	0	66	9	0	164	124	33	3,244
CA4 Div and Multi Int	12	0	312	16	0	423	12	0	395	72	74	4736	2	0	34	10	0	279	124	74	6,179
Total CA	**78**	**23**	**1955**	**128**	**30**	**3433**	**95**	**16**	**2894**	**435**	**971**	**34646**	**29**	**5**	**393**	**69**	**13**	**1985**	**834**	**1,058**	**45306**
Quantitative	18	14	493	37	23	1028	22	9	744	166	561	11,499	7	4	110	17	7	477	267	618	14,351
Writing 1000 level	3	0	36	6	0	110	2	0	34	37	0	681	0	0	0	2	0	38	50	0	899
Writing 2000 level	4	0	49	4	1	58	3	0	57	45	73	1384	1	1	7	2	1	36	59	76	1,591
Total Writing	10	0	110	18	1	253	20	0	333	249	125	4198	2	1	18	10	1	157	309	128	5,069
Total GenEd	**106**	**37**	**2558**	**183**	**54**	**4714**	**137**	**25**	**3971**	**850**	**1657**	**50343**	**38**	**10**	**521**	**96**	**21**	**2619**	**1410**	**1804**	**64726**
Actual Totals	103	24	1914	138	35	3629	111	19	3234	630	1217	37,496	29	7	407	75	16	2086	1,086	1,318	48,766

Table 4. Spring 2015 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 44,551 (**down** 451 from 2013-14). The higher 57,951 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses (up 464 from 2013-14).

Table 4 - Spring 2015																					
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
CA1 Arts and Hum	16	1	327	35	0	829	31	1	838	128	153	7,820	8	0	122	22	0	490	240	155	10,426
CA2 Social Sciences	18	1	549	29	0	989	21	1	754	86	183	8,015	5	0	88	17	0	538	176	185	10,933
CA3 Sci and Tech	4	0	109	7	0	260	7	0	186	25	39	2321	1	0	24	1	0	74	45	39	2,974
CA3 Sci and Tech Lab	9	17	280	11	24	450	9	13	288	108	279	5853	3	3	53	9	16	330	149	352	7,254
CA4 Div and Multi	4	1	87	13	0	288	7	0	196	87	3	3008	1	0	8	8	0	161	120	4	3,748
CA4 Div and Multi Int	9	0	221	13	0	391	14	0	392	71	70	4593	3	0	43	11	0	278	121	70	5,918
Total CA	**60**	**20**	**1573**	**108**	**24**	**3207**	**89**	**15**	**2654**	**505**	**727**	**31610**	**21**	**3**	**338**	**68**	**16**	**1871**	**851**	**805**	**41253**
Quantitative	18	213	412	31	16	808	22	8	658	145	478	9,887	5	2	76	18	11	525	239	728	12,366
Writing 1000 level	4	0	65	8	0	143	5	0	92	31	3	620	0	0	19	4	0	72	52	3	1,011
Writing 2000 level	3	1	44	5	1	83	3	1	52	45	74	1481	0	0	0	4	0	59	60	77	1,719
Total Writing	11	1	131	21	1	302	21	2	346	359	117	4803	5	0	64	12	0	181	429	121	5,827
Total GenEd	**89**	**234**	**2116**	**160**	**41**	**4317**	**132**	**25**	**3658**	**1009**	**1322**	**46300**	**31**	**5**	**478**	**98**	**27**	**2577**	**1519**	**1654**	**59446**
Actual Totals	68	22	1596	120	25	3291	100	19	2823	696	1077	34,009	26	4	400	73	18	1981	1083	1165	44100

The enrollment data allow the calculation of average enrollment in General Education courses in each category. 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 influenced by outliers including 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 300+ 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.

The average enrollment currently appears to be relatively steady across content areas and competencies with only small fluctuations in numbers from year to year. In Table 5, highlighted boxes indicate areas where class size has increased instead of gone down or stayed the same. It is notable that increases in class size appear predominantly in the Quantitative (Q) competency courses and CA2 and CA3 content area courses. This increase is not surprising given the increased emphasis on STEM learning at UConn and the implementation of the Next Generation initiative. However, it is important to note that the creation and offering of CA2, CA3 and Q courses does not seem to be keeping pace with this increased demand for classes in STEM fields, thus the number of offerings in CA2, CA3 and Q may eventually be a cause for concern. CA2, CA3 and Q added only three courses between them (CA3-LAB and Q each adding zero new courses), while the other content areas (CA1, CA4, and CA4-INT) added 15 and W added 24.

Table 5. *Average class size for General Education classes, 2014-2015*
Note: *Individual subsections of courses (discussion sections, labs, etc.) are NOT counted as separate classes.* 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.

Gen Ed category	Storrs		Regionals		All Campuses	
	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15	2014-13
Arts and Hum	**61**	61	**23**	24	**43**	45
Social Sciences	**95**	86	**31**	30	**62**	58
Sci and Tech	**108**	99	**35**	35	**73**	69
Sci and Tech Lab	**88**	119	**34**	32	**68**	76
Div and Multi	**35**	43	**19**	19	**29**	32
Div and Multi Intl	**65**	67	**27**	27	**49**	51
Total Cont Area	**70**	73	**27**	27	**51**	52
Quantitative	**69**	63	**27**	25	**53**	49
Writing 1000-lev	**19**	21	**18**	18	**19**	20
Writing 2000+ lev	**32**	32	**15**	16	**28**	27
Total Writing	**15**	15	**15**	15	**15**	15
Total GenEd	**52**	52	**26**	25	**42**	42

The Senate-approved General Education Guidelines recommend that most general education courses be taught by full-time faculty. In AY 2014–2015, this was true for approximately 66.5% of classes in the Fall and 40.0% of classes in the Spring across all campuses (see Tables 6a and 6b). There appears to be a sharp fall in faculty at the Assistant Professor rank in the Spring along with a steep rise in the number of Graduate Assistants teaching General Education courses for that semester. Numbers for the previous two years were as follows: 65% in Fall, 62% in Spring for AY 2013-14, and 51% in Fall, 49% in Spring for AY 2012-13. This year, full-time faculty taught over one–third (39%) of general education courses at the regional campuses, up from 34% last year, and 58% of courses at the Storrs campus, down from 65% 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 is 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 usually rises because faculty tend to teach the larger classes. When all faculty ranks are considered, full-time faculty generally teach almost three quarters of students' general education programs at Storrs. The exception to this standard was the Spring 2015 semester that saw the surge in Graduate Assistants teaching General Education courses.

Table 6a. *General Education class sections by instructor rank at each campus Fall 2014 (% 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	11.1%	10.0%	1.0%	4.4%	26.7%	54.4%	15.6%	3.3%	73.3%	90
Hartford	10.6%	9.3%	2.6%	15.9%	38.4%	48.3%	12.6%	0.7%	61.6%	151
Stamford	12.8%	22.2%	3.4%	4.3%	42.7%	50.4%	6.0%	0.9%	57.3%	117
Torrington	3.3%	6.7%	0.0%	13.3%	23.3%	76.7%	0.0%	0.0%	76.7%	30
Waterbury	24.4%	7.3%	7.3%	12.2%	51.2%	36.6%	11.0%	1.2%	48.8%	82
All Regionals (avg)	13.2%	12.1%	3.2%	10.0%	38.5%	49.8%	10.4%	1.3%	61.5%	470
Storrs	32.9%	15.9%	18.7%	7.4%	74.8%	12.2%	12.9%	0.0%	25.2%	1578
All campuses	28.4%	15.0%	15.1%	8.0%	66.5%	20.8%	12.4%	1.3%	33.5%	2048

Table 6b. *General Education class sections by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2015 (% 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	9.2%	10.5%	7.9%	2.6%	30.3%	59.2%	9.2%	1.3%	73.3%	76
Hartford	9.8%	6.8%	3.0%	15.0%	34.6%	48.1%	16.5%	0.8%	61.6%	133
Stamford	16.2%	21.9%	3.8%	4.8%	46.7%	41.0%	10.5%	1.9%	57.3%	105
Torrington	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	15.4%	26.9%	73.1%	0.0%	0.0%	76.7%	26
Waterbury	32.5%	2.5%	2.5%	15.0%	52.5%	73.5%	10.0%	0.0%	48.8%	80
All Regionals (avg)	15.2%	10.2%	4.0%	10.2%	39.8%	47.9%	11.4%	1.0%	61.5%	420
Storrs	13.8%	10.5%	12.0%	3.8%	40.1%*	4.8%	55.0%	0.1%	25.2%	1546
All campuses	21.4%	10.5%	10.3%	5.2%	40.0%	14.0%	45.7%	0.3%	33.5%	1966

*The overall percentage of full-time faculty teaching Gen Ed courses at Storrs decreases dramatically by 34.7% from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015. This appears to be due in large part to a large decrease in faculty at the Assistant Professor rank and surge in Graduate Assistants (GAs up 42.1% in Spring).

Table 7a. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Fall 2014 (% 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	13.6%	5.7%	1.6%	4.8%	25.7%	56.6%	15.6%	2.0%	74.3%	6211
Hartford	13.1%	8.5%	2.4%	13.5%	37.5%	48.8%	13.1%	0.6%	62.5%	11,763
Stamford	11.2%	23.2%	4.1%	4.3%	42.7%	50.1%	6.4%	0.7%	57.3%	10,214
Torrington	2.1%	7.7%	0.0%	9.3%	19.1%	80.9%	0.0%	0.0%	80.9%	1327
Waterbury	26.0%	6.9%	6.2%	12.2%	51.3%	37.8%	9.6%	1.3%	48.7%	6674
All Regionals (avg)	14.6%	11.8%	3.4%	9.0%	38.8%	49.7%	10.5%	1.0%	61.2%	36189
Storrs	31.6%	15.5%	19.1%	7.6%	73.7%	12.5%	13.7%	0.0%	26.3%	123,064
All campuses	27.7%	14.6%	15.5%	8.0%	65.8%	21.0%	13.0%	0.2%	34.2%	159,253

Table 7b. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2015 (% 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	11.2%	5.2%	8.1%	2.8%	27.3%	60.1%	12.1%	0.4%	72.7%	5336
Hartford	9.9%	6.7%	2.4%	13.8%	32.7%	46.7%	19.8%	0.8%	67.3%	10,602
Stamford	13.6%	21.1%	3.2%	4.0%	41.9%	43.5%	12.6%	2.0%	58.1%	9057
Torrington	2.6%	6.6%	2.8%	13.6%	25.6%	74.4%	0.0%	0.0%	74.4%	1279
Waterbury	31.1%	2.7%	1.1%	15.4%	50.3%	40.0%	9.8%	0.0%	49.7%	6443
All Regionals (avg)	15.0%	9.6%	3.3%	9.6%	37.6%	47.8%	13.8%	0.9%	62.4%	32,717
Storrs	14.3%	10.3%	11.8%	3.9%	40.3%	4.8%	54.8%	0.1%	59.7%	111,082
All campuses	14.5%	10.2%	9.9%	5.2%	39.7%	14.6%	45.5%	0.3%	60.3%	143,799

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 compared to the total general education courses taken and have mostly declined since 2010 except for this year: (**182 in AY 2014-15**; 153 in AY 2013-14; 219 in AY 2012-13; 267 in AY 2011-12 and 317 in AY 2010-11).

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

	#subs AY 2014-15	# subs AY 2013-14	# subs AY 2012-13
ACES	2	0	0
AGNR	33	27	48
CANR	0	0	0
BUSN	13	20	23
CLAS	38	47	80
CTED	20	16	10
EDUC	8	12	9
EGBU	3	1	0
ENGR	24	13	17
FNAR	26	8	9
NURS	11	7	20

PHAR	4	2	3
Total	**182**	**153**	**219**

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

Category	Substitutions 2014-15	Substitutions 2013-14	Substitutions 2012-13
CA1	17	19	26
CA2	11	10	15
CA3	6	8	6
CA3-LAB	15	27	26
CA4	31	32	47
CA4-INT	29	25	39
Q	15	8	5
W	34	13	24
Second Language	24	11	28
Sub for ENGL 1010	0	0	2
Total	**182**	**153**	**219**

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 (ECE) program (Table 10). These are University of Connecticut courses taught by high school teachers throughout the State under the supervision of University departments. **About nine thousand students are enrolled in ECE 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 ECE courses also are general education courses, the GEOC chair accepted a position on the ECE Program advisory board. The numbers provided below by ECE are the cohort of students who were part of UConn ECE Fall 2013-Spring 2014 and matriculated to UConn in Fall 2014. 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 – 2013-14 ECE Cohort admitted Fall 2014 at UConn

Category	Substitutions Fall 2014	Previous Substitution Fall 2013
CA1	147	205
CA2	62	128
CA3	39	89
CA3–Lab	369	594
CA4	7	4
CA4–Intl	6	8
Content Area Total	**630**	**1028**
Q	476	760
W	0	0
Competency Total	**476**	**760**
Grand Total	1106	1788

Concerns with First Year Writing Waivers

Perhaps the most critical challenges discussed this year by GEOC is writing instruction, and pressures to waive an increasing percentage of students from First Year Writing at UConn, based solely on AP exam performance. The central concern raised within the GEOC committee surrounds the First Year Writing course's dual role which not only includes writing instruction, but also represents the University's mechanism for teaching students how to wisely access, evaluate, and synthesize information into their writing and to properly attribute and cite sources. These information literacy skills in a digital age have drawn the attention of GEOC as a critical 21st century skill, which may replace the existing Computer Competency and expand the existing Information Literacy competency. **GEOC has moved toward the deletion of the Computer competency and in 2014-15 undertook a campus-wide assessment of current practices with regard to Information Literacy** (reported below).

Data obtained from the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation (OIRE) suggest that based on the freshman class entering Fall 2010, little difference in GPA is present between students who take First Year Writing and those who received waivers based on AP exam performance. The unequal N for this comparison makes these data somewhat uninterpretable. Further, these data do not address the core GEOC concern regarding writing skills in advanced courses, nor the key concern regarding missed instruction on digital information literacy skills.

University of Connecticut
Student GPA Comparison for English 1010[1] & 1011[2] Waiver and Non-Waiver

	Fall2010		Fall2011		Fall2012		Fall2013		Fall2014	
	Count[5]	Mean[6]	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean
Waiver[3]	455	3.39	453	3.40	444	3.43	432	3.46	42	3.00
Non-Waiver[4]	4057	2.87	3560	2.98	3260	3.09	3131	3.14	697	3.00

Notes:

1. English 1010: Seminar in Academic Writing

2. English 1011: Seminar in Writing through Literature

3.&4. Students with AP English 1 or AP English 2 score above 3 are eligible to waive their English 1010 or 1011 courses.

AP English exams include English 1 and English 2 with scores ranging from 1 to 5.

5. Count: Student headcount

6. Mean: mean of the Student Cumulative GPA at the school year

7. The above table is generated based on the First-time, first-year freshmen cohort data of Fall 2010 at UCONN.

OIRE

GEOC would anticipate that increasing undergraduate enrollments will continue to necessitate waiving students from the First Year Writing courses (ENGL 1010/1011). If GEOC were to expand the Information Literacy competency to address more contemporary digital information access, the charge to provide such instruction would like remain the purview of First Year Writing, as it is now in the Gen Ed guidelines:

> "Basic information literacy will be taught to **all freshmen** as an integral part of ENGL 1010/1011, in collaboration with the staff of the University Libraries."

This may require some update to both the Information Literacy competency skills and the process used to disseminate instruction on these skills.

Course Realignment Process (Year 2 of 5)

2014-15 GEOC activities included the second year implementation of our "Course Realignment" that was initially piloted in Spring 2013. The process applies an algorithm for selecting Gen Courses for review, rather than reviewing every Gen Ed course offered at the University. This process is described further on the GEOC website http://geoc.uconn.edu/course-alignment/ and detailed in the minutes of the committee.
In 2014-15, 17 departments/programs were selected, totaling 26 courses covering all 4 content areas as well as the W and Q competencies, with 1 selected course unavailable to review:

Background: On May 12, 2003, the University Senate charged the GEOC with, among other things:
> "monitoring periodically courses that satisfy General Education Requirements to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria adopted by the Senate; and reviewing the University-wide General Education program to ensure that its goals are being met and recommending changes to the Senate Curricula and Course Committee when appropriate."

Courses selected for Realignment 2014-2015

ANTH (1000, 1001W)
BIOL (1107)
CE 4910W course was replaced
CHEG (4137W)
DGS (4234W)
DRAM (1101, 3130, 4135W)
EDCI (4110W)
EEB (2202)
EGEN (3110W)
GEOG (1700, 1200, 2300, 3500Q, 3320W)
HEJS (1103)
MLSC/MT (4094W)
PHIL (1104, 1107, 2211Q, 2222W)
PNB (3263QW)
SCI (1051)
SLHS (1150)
URBN (1300W)

Results are summarized by Content area:

Content Area 1: Arts and Humanities
5 courses were reviewed (ANTH 1001W, DRAM 1101, GEOG 1200, HEJS 1003, PHIL 1104). The syllabi from all these courses were found to align with the CA1 criteria for inclusion as CA1 courses under the Gen Ed Guidelines. Details are in the subcommittee report.

Content Area 2: Social Sciences
4 courses were reviewed (ANTH 1000, GEOG 1700, SLHS 1150, URBN 1300W). With a minor suggestion to enhance the URBN 1300W syllabus details, all these courses were found to align with the CA2 criteria for inclusion as CA2 courses under the Gen Ed Guidelines. Details are in the subcommittee report.

Content Area 3: Science and Technology
　　　3 courses were reviewed (EEB 2202, BIOL 1107, GEOG 2300). The syllabi from all these courses were found to align with the CA3 criteria for inclusion as CA3 courses under the Gen Ed Guidelines. Details are in the subcommittee report.

Content Area 4: Diversity and Multiculturalism
　　　8 courses were reviewed (ANTH 1000, DRAM 3130, EEB 2202, GEOG 1700, HEJS 1103, PHIL 1107, SLHS 1150, URBN 1300/W). The syllabi from all these courses were found to align with the CA4 criteria for inclusion as CA4 courses under the Gen Ed Guidelines. Interestingly the review suggested that HEJS 1103 could well be appropriately designated as International, but did not have that designation at this time. Details are in the subcommittee report.

Writing competency
12 courses were reviewed (ANTH 1101W, CHEG 4137W, DGS 4234W, DRAM 4135W, EDCI 4110W, EGEN 3110W, GEOG 3320W, MLSC 4094W, PHIL 2222W, PNB 3263W, SLHS 4249W, URBN 1300W). All but 1 of the syllabi from these courses were found to align with the W criteria for inclusion as W courses under the Gen Ed Guidelines. The exception was URBN 1300W for which the committee could not make a judgment due to lack of information. Review of this course will be undertaken again next Fall in hopes of receiving sufficient information to complete the review. Details are in the subcommittee report.

Quantitative Competency
　　　3 courses were reviewed (GEOG 3500Q, PHIL 2211Q, PNB 3263QW). 2 of these courses found to align with the Q criteria for inclusion as Q courses under the Gen Ed Guidelines. One course, PNB 3263 QW, was unable to justify including this course as a Q course under the Gen Ed Guidelines. Through discussions with the instructor, course revision to remove the Q designation is under consideration. Details are in the subcommittee report.

Realignment Conclusion
Overall the 2014-15 realignment process found nearly all courses that were reviewed were consistent with the guidelines for general education courses. In fact, many reviews found that courses had improved beyond their original CAR designs and goals. GEOC considered these results very positive and thanks all those involved in the realignment review including GEOC subcommittee members and those responding to our requests from the university faculty for helping to conduct this year's process.

General Education Course Enhancement Grant (Provost's) Competition

The annual General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition is designed to promote the ongoing enhancement, innovation, renewal, 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 by positively encouraging the development of courses that support GEOC goals for continuous improvement and renewal of Gen Ed.

In 2014-2015, an effort was made to move the competition review process to the Fall in order to align the process with the fiscal year budgeting cycle. Conducting the review in Fall 2014 has made this alignment. The Provost's General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition was held this year for the eleventh time. A total of eight proposals were received (down four from AY 13-14) and five of those were funded (up two from AY 13-14). The change in timing may have been a factor in the number of proposals received.

The number of successful proposals for the Provost's General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition has declined in recent years, and this is due to several factors. In the first place, proposers tend to

seek the full award amount per year, so this limits the total number of proposals that can be funded. Moreover, the review committee identified three main areas in which proposals were found to be lacking:

- Thoroughness of the course objectives, specifically the student learning outcomes and how well they aligned with indicated assessments.

- How well the proposed budget aligned with the direct development of course, not necessarily professional development for the instructor.

- How well the courses aligned with the GEOC guideline content areas proposed. Overall it was felt that some proposals took a shotgun approach and tried to shoot broadly here. On the contrary, the committee felt that this showed a lack of understanding of General Education guidelines. The courses the committee chose to fund most clearly demonstrated a clear and focused approach to one, or at most two content areas or competencies.

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 in every area, the GEOC identifies priority foci each year for which to solicit proposals. This year's competition once again focused on soliciting the following types of courses:

- Courses from any discipline that focused on creative or innovative ways to incorporate 21st Century work skills and learning skills and Digital Information Literacy (DIL) objectives,

- Courses that improved or added to the available options for students trying to fulfill their CA3 or Q requirements,

- Innovative W courses in any discipline, with an emphasis on 2000 level W courses

- New or revised Sophomore-level General Education courses in all areas.

The five proposals selected for funding this year included:
- Three new courses (one 1000-level, two 2000-level)
- Revision of one 3000-level course, and the revision of a 1000-level departmental course sequence
- One course already in the W competency, two courses seeking W status, two courses seeking CA1 status, two courses seeking CA4 status, and 6 courses (the sequence) all in the CA3 content area.

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

Category	Grants Funded 2004-2013	Spring 2014 Winners
CA1	33	2
CA2	17	
CA3	13	1 (6 courses)
CA4	39	2
Q	9	
W	23	3
Sec Lang	1	
Totals	79	5

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.

Information Literacy Competency Review

This Spring, under the direction of GEOC Chair Michael Young and Scott Campbell from the Writing Center, the GEOC is undertaking a survey and assessment of Information Literacy courses. Survey and in-depth interview methods are being used to elicit from faculty their best practices and current view of information literacy as general education competency in a digital age.

Background and context for this inquiry includes an upcoming NEASC accreditation process that will seek evidence that UConn undergraduates achieve the Gen Ed competencies (including information literacy) and an interest of the current faculty members of GEOC in possible deletion of the computer competency and revision of the Info Lit competency to account for the ways information is accessed and used in a digital age. Add to this that the ACRL library standards (pdf document) on which the original GEOC Info Lit competency was based are under revision for 2014-15. Quoting from that revision document, the revised ACRL framework, "draws significantly upon the concept of metaliteracy, which offers a renewed vision of information literacy as an overarching set of abilities in which students are both consumers and creators of information in multiple formats." In a digital age, accessing, analyzing, summarizing, and wisely using information seems like a skill set we would like to have as part of Gen Ed at UConn. Yet, our working group could use input in order to build from best practices currently in use in UConn courses.

Resources/Links:
Current Gen Ed Info Lit Competency Description: http://geoc.uconn.edu/information-literacy-competency/
2014 Proposed Revisions to the ACRL Standards http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Framework-for-IL-for-HE-Draft-2.pdf

The results of this current review will be available by June 2015.

W Course "Quarantine"

On 12/12/13 the GEOC approved a motion for 'W quarantine' whereby the approval process of a mixed non-W and W course could be split, permitting implementation of the changes before the GEOC has approved under condition that the W version would not be offered prior to GEOC and Senate C&CC approval. At the same time, language in the Gen Ed Guidelines related to the initial 2004 implementation of the General Education Curriculum was updated to reflect current practices. The revised, Section B.2 is contained in the minutes of the April 2015 meeting and should soon appear as the text of the guidelines on the GEOC website. In brief, the solution was to allow courses that offer version of the same numbered course with and without a W designation, to offer the non-W version as soon as that course syllabus is approved through the normal C&C process, but the W version would be "quarantined" from being offered until it was reviewed as a W course by GEOC and approved by the senate C&CC.

Civility as a Gen Ed Competency

GEOC had several meetings that included extended discussions of the Civility Task Force's call for civility education to, "proceed beyond the first year through General Education requirements and through courses and co-curricular programs that promote civility, diversity, health, and safety." The CA-4 subcommittee of GEOC took up the topic of a Gen Ed Civility Competency and produced the following statement.

> One of the first questions that came up was the issue of what civility meant and whether it was possible to teach it. We agreed that university educators have the ability and perhaps the responsibility to teach civility. Current campus climate and the pervasive uncivil behavior frequently found in the comment sections of websites would suggest that this needs attending to.

Rather than teaching people "what ideas to adopt," it can be an opportunity to ask some fundamental questions: How do we live in a "multicultural" society where competing ideas frequently come in contact? How do we engage with the political "other," meaning how do we engage in debate with others who have fundamentally different world views? What does the term "civility" mean? What is the historicity of "civility" throughout time and space?

These socio-cultural issues can also be associated to the fact that civility is important in interpersonal relationships, the expression of emotions and the concept of empathy. Therefore, an array of topics can be associated to civility including politeness and courtesy, empathy and compassion, prosocial behavior, manners and etiquette, selflessness and altruism, love and friendship, solidarity, citizenship, peace, urban development and design, animal defense and protection, ecology and respect in nature.

Therefore, we have created a list of topics that can be related to the teaching and learning of civility:

1. History of civility as a concept (and terms associated to it).
2. Psychology of civility and related concepts.
3. Behavior and social rules
4. Multiculturalism and intercultural communication
5. Social and political aspects of civility
6. Teaching and learning civility
7. Intercultural and foreign language learning
8. Study abroad and international experience
9. Race and racism
10. Urban design and architecture
11. Animal studies
12. Music, Art, History of Art and artistic creativity
13. Theater and acting
14. Ecology and Environmental studies
15. Digital communication and virtual world
16. War and Peace Studies

In our discussion we concluded that it could be handled the following ways:
a) Adding it as a competency.
b) Revising existing competencies to include civility criteria in CA1, CA2 and CA4 content standards and outcomes.
c) take no action.

Our recommendation is to revise existing competencies. By alteration of some of the language in existing competencies, civility can be added, without much disruption, or the negatives of adding, and thus watering down, competencies.

This statement was accepted, but not endorsed by GEOC at its Nov 2014 meeting after extended discussion. The broader GEOC discussion included the following issues:
- It was noted that there is a difference between the promotion of civility, the creation of a civility competency and the associated assessment of civility as a competency. If it was included in the competencies, GEOC raised the question of how could/would civility be assessed?
- GEOC questioned whether regular faculty without a background in law would be qualified to "teach civility as an academic construct," and that such civility instruction could become a slippery slope for faculty to begin proselytizing about how to live or what values to adopt.

- A concern was raised that civility was not an issue of academic knowledge per se, but a campus culture problem and expressed reservations about being able to cover the topic through classwork and graded assignments. A number of CA4 instructors agreed that in some limited respects they already address the topic concerning minorities in their existing multicultural courses, but they were would not be comfortable teaching the broader issues of civility.

Concluding Comments

Gen Ed at UConn is functioning well. Review of Gen Ed is pending for Fall 2015 as it faces a number of challenges in the areas of writing instructional for all students, and the changing nature of Digital Literacies competencies. The University's interest in creating a campus environment that values civility is also related to the Gen Ed mission, though GEOC has several reservations.

As part of the University's 2014 strategic initiatives and Academic Plan for achieving excellence in Undergraduate Education, the Gen Ed program must remain rigorous and innovative, while incorporating contemporary pedagogy and uses of technology, and also continuing to adjust to the changing needs of students and society. GEOC would hope to continue to work with University Administration to sustain and continuously adapt Gen Ed to the changing needs of the University, the State, and the Nation.

Also related to the University's priorities as set in the Academic Plan, Service Learning may be an area that could be supported and integrated with Gen Ed requirements and has potential for contributing to establishing a campus-wide environment of civility and tolerance, required for academic debate. Learning in the area of Service Learning may be a priority for the Freshman and Sophomore curriculum and thus may find a nexus with the principles of Gen Ed and an interest in civility.

In conclusion, as chair of GEOC, I would like to commend the members of the committee for their service to the institution, and encourage administration to continue to value service of this sort to ensure the work of this and related committees continues to receive engagement by the faculty.

GEOC Committee Members 2014–2015 Academic Year

Michael F. Young ('16)	Chair
Thomas Abbott ('16)	CA3
JC Beall ('16)	W
Scott Campbell ('15)	Info Lit
Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos ('16) [Sabbatical, Spring '15]	Sec Lang
Arthur Engler ('16)	W
David Gross ('16)	Q
Peter Kaminsky ('15)	CA1
Thomas Meyer ('16)	CA3
Stephanie Milan ('16)	CA2
Olivier Morand ('16)	CA2
Gustavo Nanclares ('16)	CA1
Eric Schultz (Senate C&CC, ex officio)	N/A
Fatma Selampinar ('15)	Q
Kathleen Tonry (Fall '14)	W
Eduardo Urios-Aparisi ('16)	CA4
Manuela Wagner ('15)	Sec Lang
Bing Wang ('15)	Computer Comp

Karen Piantek (Program Assistant)

GEOC Subcommittee Members 2014-2015 Academic Year

CA1 Arts and Humanities
Peter Kaminsky, Co-Chair (through Fall '14)
Gustavo Nanclres, Co-Chair
Michael Bradford, CoChair (starting Spring '15)

CA2 Social Sciences
Stephanie Milan, Co-Chair
Olivier Morand, Co-Chair
David Atkin
Linda Lee
Charles Venator

CA3 Science and Technology
Thomas Abbott, Co-Chair
Thomas Meyer, Co-Chair
Richard Mancini
David Perry

CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism
Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, Co-Chair
Joseph Abramo, Co-Chair (starting Spring '15)
Mark Kohan

Computer Technology
Laurent Michel, Co-Chair
Richard Jones, Co-Chair
Steven Park
Katherina Sorrentino

Information Literacy
Michael F. Young, Co-Chair
Scott Campbell, Co-Chair
Shikha Sharma
Andrea Hubbard
Carolyn Lin
Susanna Cowan

Second Language
Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos, Co-Chair
Manuela Wagner, Co-Chair
Brian Boecherer
Kenneth Fuchsman
Rajeev Bansal

Quantitative
David Gross, Co-Chair
Fatma Selampinar, Co-Chair
Jennifer Tufts
James Cole

Writing

Kathleen Tonry, Co-Chair (through Fall'14)
Arthur Engler, Co-Chair (starting Spring '15)
JC Beall, Co-Chair (starting Spring '15)
Douglas Kaufman
Beth Ginsberg
Tom Long