

General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC)

Report of Activities AY 2015-16

Executive Summary

From the perspective of the GEOC, General Education (Gen Ed) continues to thrive at UConn. As of March 2016, 58 Gen Ed related Course action request (CAR) proposals were received (25 fewer than last year). Eleven new courses were approved and 17 existing courses were revised. Members of the GEOC voluntarily worked hard to review their colleagues' CAR requests, and the resulting discussions of the GEOC may be some of the richest conversations about teaching and learning on campus. This voluntary hard work stands as a testament to the value faculty place on General Education and their support of the Gen Ed goals stated on the GEOC website (<http://geoc.uconn.edu/>).

Fall 2015, the Faculty Senate undertook a task force study of General Education. As in the past, this year GEOC discussed possible changes and potential updates to the Gen Ed competencies, but in deference to the Task Force, GEOC withheld substantive action during this year, with the exception of a recommendation to remove the Computer Competency and update the Information Literacy competency. GEOC completed its review of CAR requests and undertook realignment in the 5-year cycle of reviews, but deferred its work in other areas while the task force completed its work. For example, GEOC did not hold a Provost competition for new Gen Ed courses (a 2 year funding cycle), noting that any new task force priorities should take precedence and begin Fall 2016. Likewise GEOC did not fund an assessment in light of the Task Force's work and focus groups involving the campus community in a discussion of Gen Ed. The exception to this deferred action was that after several years of discussion, GEOC moved to recommend the elimination the computer competency, as outdated and better structured as revised elements within a digital information literacy competency.

This year's realignment process once again found that many of the University's Gen Ed courses are well aligned with the Content Area and Competency guidelines. An exception was that several W course specifics across 5 years drifted away from inclusion in syllabi in several programs. These details include informing students on the syllabi that their W component grade is linked to their overall course grade, and also detailing on the syllabus how writing will be evaluated, revised, and taught. As a result, GEOC would recommend that these details be more fully specified in the guidelines and on the GEOC website, and particularly in the CAR directions. GEOC has participated in piloting a new fully online form for the CAR which might help integrate these more detailed W specifications. GEOC also identified some complexities for W courses in STEM areas and would suggest that next year's GEOC consider adding STEM specialists to the W subcommittee, whose workload is often the largest, so additional staffing would be appropriate.

There continue to be pressures to substitute courses taken elsewhere and complete UConn-equivalent courses elsewhere (such as high school Early College Experience) that also meet Gen Ed requirements. This trend remains a concern of GEOC when one purpose of General Education is brand instruction at UConn. When substitutions are made, it is then difficult to assert that our Gen Ed curriculum makes us unique. There are also concerns with vertical integration, when UConn higher level courses build on preparation in Gen Ed courses.

BoilerPlate about GEOC

The General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) is tasked by the faculty Senate Courses and Curriculum Committee (C&CC) with oversight of Gen Ed at UConn, including review of new course proposals, course changes, and a 5 year realignment process. GEOC consists of chairs and co-chairs of ten GEOC Subcommittees, and its members come from faculty 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/>.

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. Since then only minor changes to the GEOC guidelines have occurred. 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, and the report of the Task Force may highlight additional areas for consideration.

Deletion of the Computer Competency/ Revision of Information Literacy

GEOC has been discussing revision of the Computer Competency and Information Literacy requirement for several years. Technological changes in these areas, from 2000 to 2016, are quite remarkable. The penetration of mobile technologies into campus activities in general and classroom learning specifically represents only one such change. The year 2000 conceptions of what it means to locate information (e.g., in the Library's computer databases) on which the existing information literacy competency is based have changed dramatically. Much original scholarship now begins and exists solely on the Internet in digital formats. Information Literacy and Computer skills have combined and the 21st century skills for living and learning are perhaps more appropriately addressed as Digital Literacy skills, rather than separately information or skills with digital devices. GEOC has undertaken discussion of these issues in the context of potentially combining the current Information Literacy requirement with the Computer Technology requirement into a single Digital Literacy competency.

Independently, instructors for the First Year Writing course have made changes to requirements related to digital information access, and online writing. In 2016, GEOC unanimously recommended that the Computer Competency be removed, and updates to the Information Literacy competency be considered that include digital information access, analysis, synthesis, and communication.

Recommendation:

1. That the Computer Technology Competency be dropped.
2. That the following language be added to the FYW courses at UConn as an additional element of the already-existing Information Literacy component within those courses:

“In addition to the research-based skills (finding, accessing, evaluating, creating, and making use of information) that remain the core of the Information Literacy competency, all FYW courses should:

- Include an associated course management component (HuskyCT or similar site)
- Require at least one cycle of projects be submitted, circulated, and reviewed digitally

Explore the potential for composition beyond typewritten text, including image, media, and other digital design elements”

Deletion motion justification:

The current computer competency, as embodied as a HuskyCT multiple choice quiz concerning 1990’s memory storage devices and the like, has outlasted its usefulness. In consultation with STEM faculty and in particular the Computer Science faculty, it seemed prudent to incorporate digital information literacy into revised and updated information literacy competencies and remove the computer technology competency as a separate entity. GEOC’s information literacy subcommittee has been working on recommendations in light of the revised ACRL standards. An assessment of Info Lit conducted Spring 2015 found that:

- ACRL’s standards on which the 2006 GEOC Info Lit guidelines are based, have progressed
- Threshold Concepts in the ACRL’s 2014 revision include (see <http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Framework-for-IL-for-HE-Draft-2.pdf>):
 - Scholarship is a Conversation
 - Research as Inquiry
 - Authority is Contextual and Constructed
 - Information Creation as a Process (new in next draft)
 - Searching as Strategic
 - Information has Value
- The departmental Info Lit plans at UConn are in need of revision and updating (and last year we helped get those plans into a more visible space and built a list of updated course numbers for Info Lit courses)
- Info Lit appears to have a significant presence at UConn, albeit in uneven (and perhaps even unconscious) implementation (that is, not all know what Info Lit is or how UConn’s Gen Ed requirements describe it)
- Many UConn faculty pursue Info Lit practices in a very wide range of ways
- Many faculty support the inclusion of collaboration, creation (innovation), and digital components in Info Lit (including the folding in of the computer literacy competency)
- First-Year Writing courses are requiring more in the tech/digital dimension (HuskyCT and at least one cycle of projects to be circulated digitally)
- Students and faculty could benefit from a more clearly articulated statement of what the Info Lit competency entails and/or how it works at UConn, including better departmental plans, examples from a range of disciplines, Best Practices, and links to further resources.
- There is at present no way to ensure that students receive the Info Lit support outlined in the GEOC documents, and there is no assessment mechanism in place. (We do have the SAILS results from 2007)

The proposed drop of the Computer Competency is directly related to the teaching of writing within the University. The 2000 Taskforce Report on Gen Ed intended writing to be taught at 2 levels. Writing instruction was to be introduced to all UConn students through First Year Writing (ENGL 1010/1011). This course was also intended to teach the entry level Information Literacy competencies. Quoting from the current 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.”

College level skills in writing were intended to be taught through an extended writing seminar taken in the first year, continuing in discipline-specific “W” courses distributed throughout a student’s major. The first year writing course is an anomaly within Gen Ed as it is a required part of the guidelines, specifically mentioned, but is not a Gen Ed course per se. The role of first year writing, in preparation for advanced “W” courses in the major is an item for review. First year writing serves not only to teach writing, but as the primary mechanism for the Information Literacy competency. The proposed deletion of the Computer Competency is accompanied

by a recommendation to consider updates to first year writing with regard to Information Literacy in general, and the use of digital sources specifically.

The 2015-16 General Education Oversight Committee herein reports on the following activities:

- New Course approvals 2015-16
- Gen Ed Status report
- Concerns with First Year Writing waivers
- Course Alignment Process (year 3 of 5 in the cycle)
- Course Enhancement Grant (Provost's) Competition
- Information Literacy Competency Review
- Computer Technology Competency Deletion

New General Education Course Approvals 2015-2016

The general education curriculum continues to mature and now contains 589 content area courses and 571 skill code courses. (Note: The figures count cross-listed courses as separate courses).

GEOC collaborated with Senate C&CC to pilot test an automated form for the CAR. It is hoped that this work is in its final stages of completion and the new form will simplify the workflow and enable the process to be more transparent for faculty proposing course changes.

As of March in the AY 2015-2016, 58 proposals were received (25 fewer than last year). These proposals have currently resulted in the addition of 11 new courses to the curriculum; 17 existing courses being revised; 3 courses approved for intersession offering; and 0 courses dropped from the curriculum. Twenty-seven of the 58 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 courses added in each Content Area and Competency this year were as follows:

CA1 Arts and Humanities: 5
CA2 Social Sciences: 5
CA3 Science and Technology: 1
CA3-LAB Science and Technology: 0
CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism: 4
CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism: 8
Q Quantitative: 0
Writing: 4

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 March 7, 2016 Senate meeting).*

Content Area/Competency	1000-level courses 2015-16	2000+level courses 2015-16	Total # of courses 2015-16	Percentage at 1000- level	Percentage at 2000- level
CA1 Arts and Humanities	104	30	209	50%	14%
CA2 Social Sciences	48	10	72	67%	14%

CA3 Science and Technology	31	7	38	82%	18%
CA3 Science and Technology - Lab	30	0	30	100%	0%
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism	29	12	121	24%	10%
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism - International	51	18	119	43%	15%
*Total content area courses	293	77	589	50%	13%
Quantitative	45	19	80	56%	24%
Writing	28	60	491	6%	12%
**Total skill courses	73	79	571	13%	14%

* 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 table above shows both current course totals for all content area and skill courses, as well as percentages for courses in those categories at the 1000- and 2000- level. In general, courses with CA4, CA4-Int, and W designations have fewer 1000-level courses than other content areas or competencies, and instead have a larger percentage of courses at the 3000- or even 4000-level. Across the board, however, there continue to be relatively few 2000-level courses in any content area or competency, with records showing that there are no 2000-level CA3-Lab courses at all.

Intensive Sessions

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 3 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 intensive course format. In the past, GEOC has collected faculty reports on provisionally approved intersession courses offered more than two times in a condensed format and used this information to determine whether a course should be re-categorized to “fully approved.” Over the past several years, the GEOC seems less inclined to issue provisional approvals but has instead opted for full approvals in all cases; courses that are in question may simply be declined or sent back for revision. There was some discussion in the GEOC this semester about how to handle courses that are still on the provisional approval list. A representative from Summer Programs was unsure whether that office should be policing these offerings and noted that some courses on the provisional list have been offered in the recent past without having undergone the established review procedure.

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

Course disposition	2015-16	2014-15	Total 2005-15
Approved	3	2	70
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 Program Implementation

Tables 3 (F 2015) and 4 (S 2016) 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 2015 General Education courses and enrollment by campus and category. Only credit-bearing sections of courses have been included. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted.

Note: Actual physical seats are 50,283; the higher 65,503 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses.

Table 3 - Fall 2015														
Campus	AVPT		HTFD		STMFD		STORR		TORR		WTBY		ALL	
GenEd category	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot
CA1 Arts and Hum	20	482	35	909	28	840	258	8,261	7	94	23	526	371	11,112
CA2 Social Sciences	18	472	31	992	27	924	271	9,872	7	106	18	512	372	12,878
CA3 Sci and Tech	5	172	6	236	8	294	93	2809	1	21	4	183	117	3,715
CA3 Sci and Tech Lab	22	319	30	595	17	385	329	5723	7	106	19	518	424	7,646
CA4 Div and Multi	7	123	15	265	12	269	80	2296	5	45	8	142	127	3,140
CA4 Div and Multi Int	11	303	13	392	15	450	148	5022	3	45	9	235	199	6,447
Total CA	83	1871	130	3389	107	3162	1179	33983	30	417	81	2116	1,610	44938
Quantitative	36	807	43	1078	27	833	571	11,631	9	143	21	503	707	14,995
Writing 1000 level	2	34	5	95	3	55	36	685	0	0	2	38	48	907
Writing 2000 level	5	75	7	114	4	74	99	1403	2	21	3	38	120	1,725
Total Writing	10	124	22	300	21	360	349	4610	2	21	11	155	415	5,570
Total GenEd	129	2802	195	4767	155	4355	2099	50224	41	581	113	2774	2732	65503
Actual Totals	89	1911	148	3692	125	3512	1596	38,702	31	444	85	2022	2,074	50,283

Table 4. Spring 2016

General Education courses and enrollment by campus and category. Only credit-bearing sections of courses have been included. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted.

Note: Actual physical seats are 45,591; the higher 58,882 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses.

Campus	AVPT		HTFD		STMFD		STORR		TORR		WTBY		ALL	
GenEd category	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot	Course	EnrTot
CA1 Arts and Hum	14	370	31	717	30	867	246	7,865	7	105	17	396	345	10,320
CA2 Social Sciences	17	549	30	1003	22	753	248	8,318	4	65	19	552	340	11,240
CA3 Sci and Tech	5	118	7	247	7	259	66	2636	0	0	2	85	87	3,345
CA3 Sci and Tech Lab	16	263	24	451	15	316	277	4698	3	36	17	327	352	6,091
CA4 Div and Multi	4	79	16	340	11	314	78	2119	4	47	8	147	121	3,046
CA4 Div and Multi Int	7	212	14	403	13	360	124	4820	3	56	9	236	170	6,087
Total CA	63	1591	122	3161	98	2869	1039	30456	21	309	72	1743	1415	40129
Quantitative	23	449	39	841	26	749	500	10,095	6	85	20	466	614	12,685
Writing 1000 level	4	69	6	112	4	76	39	722	0	0	6	112	59	1,091
Writing 2000 level	3	52	7	122	8	148	83	1298	0	0	1	18	102	1,638
Total Writing	10	160	22	308	32	432	464	4964	3	27	13	177	544	6,068
Total GenEd	96	2200	183	4310	156	4050	2003	45515	30	421	105	2386	2573	58882
Actual Totals	88	2082	135	3248	119	3110	1567	35,023	23	316	78	1812	2010	45591

Table 5 shows the average enrollment in General Education courses in each category. 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, which often have 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 sometimes shown to exceed the 19 student limit because some W courses may have larger enrollments in lecture/seminar sections before students are then broken into discussion sections of 19 where they received their writing instruction. These numbers also depend on which sections of courses are the credit-bearing sections. This often varies between lecture, lab and discussion sections across departments. 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.

Table 5. Average class size for General Education classes, 2015-2016

***Note:** The totals for 2015-16 were calculated differently than the totals for 2014-15. The totals for 2015-16 use the enrollment numbers for credit-bearing sections of courses only. For some courses the credit-bearing section may be a lecture; for other courses it may be a lab or discussion, etc. For 2014-15, totals were calculated based on the numbers for lecture sections of all courses. This is why the totals for 2014-15 appear to be significantly larger in some categories. Calculating based on the credit-bearing section is a more accurate representation of class size.

Gen Ed category	Storrs		Regionals		All Campuses	
	2015-16*	2014-15	2015-16*	2014-15	2015-16*	2014-15
Arts and Hum	32	61	25	23	30	43
Social Sciences	35	95	31	31	34	62
Sci and Tech	34	108	36	35	35	73
Sci and Tech Lab	17	88	20	34	18	68
Div and Multi	28	35	20	19	25	29
Div and Multi Intl	36	65	28	27	34	49
Total Cont Area	29	70	26	27	28	51

Quantitative	20	69	24	27	21	53
Writing 1000-lev	19	19	18	18	19	19
Writing 2000+ lev	15	32	17	15	15	28
Total Writing	12	15	14	15	12	15
Total GenEd	23	52	24	26	23	42

Faculty Instruction of General Education

The Senate-approved General Education Guidelines recommend that most general education courses be taught by full-time faculty. In AY 2015–2016, this was true for approximately 64.2% of classes in the Fall and 64.1% of classes in the Spring across all campuses (see Tables 6a and 6b). Last year there was 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, but the numbers appear to have returned to normal this academic year. Numbers for the previous two years were as follows: 67% in Fall, 40% in Spring for AY 2012-13, and 65% in Fall, 62% in Spring for AY 2013-14. This year, full-time faculty taught over one-third (39%) of general education courses at the regional campuses, the same as last year, and 71% of courses at the Storrs campus, up from 58% 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.

Table 6a. *General Education class sections by instructor rank at each campus Fall 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	7.9%	12.4%	3.4%	5.6%	29.2%	57.3%	10.1%	3.4%	70.8%	89
Hartford	16.2%	8.8%	2.7%	4.7%	32.4%	52.0%	14.9%	0.7%	67.6%	148
Stamford	18.4%	20.8%	4.8%	3.2%	47.2%	48.8%	3.2%	0.8%	52.8%	125
Torrington	0.0%	3.7%	3.7%	11.1%	18.5%	77.8%	3.7%	0.0%	81.5%	27
Waterbury	27.1%	9.4%	10.6%	5.9%	52.9%	37.6%	9.4%	0.0%	47.1%	85
All Regionals (avg)	16.2%	12.4%	4.9%	5.1%	38.6%	51.1%	9.3%	1.1%	61.4%	474
Storrs	27.1%	18.7%	20.0%	6.0%	71.8%	14.2%	13.0%	1.0%	28.2%	1597
All campuses	24.6%	17.3%	16.6%	5.8%	64.2%	22.6%	12.2%	1.0%	35.8%	2071

Table 6b. *General Education class sections by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2016 (% 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	9.6%	9.6%	6.8%	6.8%	32.9%	58.9%	6.8%	1.4%	67.1%	73
Hartford	22.2%	8.1%	2.2%	2.2%	34.8%	51.1%	13.3%	0.7%	65.2%	135
Stamford	15.1%	23.5%	5.0%	3.4%	47.1%	44.5%	7.6%	0.8%	52.9%	119
Torrington	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.4%	17.4%	73.9%	8.7%	0.0%	82.6%	23
Waterbury	28.2%	5.1%	3.8%	7.7%	44.9%	46.2%	9.0%	0.0%	55.1%	78
All Regionals (avg)	18.0%	11.7%	4.0%	5.1%	38.8%	50.9%	9.6%	0.7%	61.2%	428
Storrs	27.6%	16.1%	19.3%	8.0%	71.0%	13.6%	13.3%	2.2%	29.0%	1567
All campuses	25.5%	15.2%	16.0%	7.4%	64.1%	21.6%	12.5%	1.9%	35.9%	1995

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. This year the opposite was true, however. Percentages actually went down for Storrs faculty. The reason for this is not immediate clear.

Table 7a. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Fall 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	11.1%	7.3%	2.2%	5.3%	25.9%	60.1%	11.5%	2.5%	74.1%	6217
Hartford	13.2%	8.5%	3.4%	4.3%	29.4%	56.5%	13.3%	0.7%	70.6%	12,014
Stamford	14.7%	21.0%	5.2%	3.3%	44.2%	51.9%	3.0%	0.9%	55.8%	11,160
Torrington	0.0%	3.5%	0.5%	8.8%	12.8%	85.5%	1.8%	0.0%	87.2%	1196
Waterbury	27.2%	7.3%	9.8%	5.5%	49.9%	39.8%	10.3%	0.0%	50.1%	6533
All Regionals (avg)	15.3%	11.7%	4.8%	4.5%	36.3%	53.7%	9.0%	0.9%	63.7%	37,120
Storrs	25.1%	17.2%	20.8%	7.6%	70.6%	14.7%	13.3%	1.4%	29.4%	125,598
All campuses	22.8%	16.0%	17.1%	6.9%	62.8%	23.6%	12.3%	1.3%	37.2%	162,718

Table 7b. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2016 (% 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%	6.8%	6.0%	6.9%	29.8%	63.5%	6.1%	0.7%	70.2%	5504
Hartford	20.2%	8.6%	1.2%	2.2%	32.2%	51.4%	15.7%	0.8%	67.8%	10,487
Stamford	13.9%	21.5%	4.1%	2.3%	41.8%	48.7%	8.6%	1.0%	58.2%	9926
Torrington	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	15.4%	69.8%	14.8%	0.0%	84.6%	1014
Waterbury	24.9%	5.9%	3.4%	8.8%	42.9%	46.8%	10.3%	0.0%	57.1%	5897
All Regionals (avg)	16.8%	11.4%	3.2%	4.6%	36.1%	52.3%	10.9%	0.7%	63.9%	32,828
Storrs	24.9%	16.1%	19.0%	9.1%	69.0%	14.5%	14.5%	2.0%	31.0%	112,588
All campuses	23.0%	15.0%	15.4%	8.1%	61.6%	23.1%	13.7%	1.7%	38.4%	145,416

Instructor notification. A final note concerning typical Gen Ed courses. Prior to each semester it has been past practice to email instructors of all Gen Ed courses to inform them that their course is part of the Gen Ed curriculum. Fall 2014 this was done by the Gen Ed office, after several years of transition. There were complications with regard to courses listed in the catalog but not actually offered, but the importance of this notification was once again highlighted when it was not done Fall 2015. It seems like an important administrative activity that should be automated to help ensure consistency in Gen Ed teaching.

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 steeply declined since 2010: 153 in AY 2013-14; 219 in AY 2012-13; 267 in AY 2011-12 and 317 in AY 2010-11. Last year was the first year in recent history that the numbers rose, 182 for AY 2014-15, but the numbers for AY 2015-16 are down again very slightly: 176 for AY 2015-16.

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

	#subs AY 2015-16	#subs AY 2014-15	# subs AY 2013-14
ACES	7	2	0
AGNR	26	33	27
CANR	0	0	0
BUSN	21	13	20
CLAS	43	38	47
CTED	14	20	16
EDUC	3	8	12
EGBU	5	3	1
ENGR	28	24	13
FNAR	20	26	8
NURS	9	11	7
PHAR	0	4	2
Total	176	182	153

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

Category	Substitutions 2015-16	Substitutions 2014-15	Substitutions 2013-14
CA1	13	17	19
CA2	18	11	10
CA3	4	6	8
CA3-LAB	20	15	27
CA4	31	31	32
CA4-INT	29	29	25
Q	6	15	8
W	25	34	13
Second Language	30	24	11
Sub for ENGL 1010	0	0	0
Total	176	182	153

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.

The numbers provided below by ECE are the cohort of students who were part of UConn ECE Fall 2014-Spring 2015 and matriculated to UConn in Fall 2015. 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 – 2014-15 ECE Cohort admitted Fall 2015 at UConn

Category	Substitutions Fall 2015	Substitutions Fall 2014	Previous Substitution Fall 2013
CA1	227	147	205
CA2	118	62	128
CA3	63	39	89
CA3-Lab	495	369	594
CA4	10	7	4
CA4-Intl	19	6	8
Content Area Total	932	630	1028
Q	561	476	760
W	0	0	0
Competency Total	561	476	760
Grand Total	1493	1106	1788

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. However, due to the formation of the General Education Task Force and the current review of the status of General Education at UConn, the competition to fund new courses was not held this year. The second year of funding for 2014-15 winners was funded. The competition was postponed pending a report on the findings and potential recommendations of the task force.

Gen Ed Course Realignment 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*). GEOC has developed a small-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. 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.

In 2011 the GEOC developed a 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 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 was ready for a regular program of surveys.

Departments that offer general education courses are selected each year to participate in the general education alignment survey. A sample of courses offered by each participating department is 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 is used for content areas and competencies that are represented in multiple courses offered by the department (two courses are sampled and the department is asked to choose one of the two). Once the GEOC subcommittees have finished their revision of the Information Literacy competency, departments will also be asked 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 permits 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 contents 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.

This year, the following departments were selected for review: AASI, ACCT, AFRA*, AMST, CHEM, ECE*, ECON, FINA*, GPS*, HEB*, HORT, ISKM*, LAND, MAST, MATH, PSYC, PT*, TURF*. Between them, the departments submitted a total of 19 courses for review.

*Note: Alignment materials were not received from the following departments for reasons as stated: AFRA never responded to repeated attempts to contact them about the alignment; ECE did not have any courses eligible for alignment; while FINA originally responded to alignment requests, no materials were ever received from them after repeated reminders; the only eligible course from GPS was waived because it will be “sunsetting” shortly; HEB was merged with JUDS recently to form HEJS, which was aligned last year; both ISKM and PT no longer exist as undergraduate designations; and the only eligible course from TURF was waived because it will likely be revised after the Spring 2016.

Concluding Comments

Gen Ed at UConn is functioning well. The Task Force may provide insights into changes beneficial to Gen Ed. The 2015-16 GEOC proposed changing the nature of Digital Literacies competencies by deletion of the current Computer Competency and expansion of Information Literacy to encompass digital resources and the 2014 ACRL framework.

As part of the University’s strategic initiatives and Academic Plan, 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. General Education is mentioned in UConn’s 2014

Academic Plan as a means for achieving excellence in Undergraduate Education. 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. Task Force recommendations may detail possible changes.

The Value of General Education. In an era where the value of higher education is often determined solely by efficiency in career preparation and the increased starting salary of graduates, it may be important to continue the dialog concerning the value of general education, to students, to faculty, to the University, to businesses, and to a democratic society. General Education is intended to broaden the perspective of student beyond their career preparation. It is also intended to strengthen important thinking skills presumed essential to a functioning Jeffersonian democracy, including thinking beyond self interests, appreciation of diversity of thinking, civil discourse, strategic analysis of big data and complex issues, and the ability to express one's opinions in a scholarly and respectful manner that contributes to society. When financial concerns overtake educational goals and values, General Education is the most likely first victim. Academic advisors need to be reminded of the shared values of the University community with regard to general education goals and students themselves need to become aware of not just the list of requirements, but the underlying purpose of seeking a general education.

In conclusion, Gen Ed at UConn remains strong. It faces several challenges and may need to face others as the University moves to implement its Academic Plan. GEOC looks forward to continuing to work closely with University Administration to maintain and strengthen its work to ensure every UConn graduate is prepared individually in their domain as well as able to fulfill the responsibilities as a citizen, behave ethically, respect and appreciate the value of diversity, assume a leadership role, collaborate on a team, and effectively communicate their ideas to others.

GEOC Committee Members 2015–2016 Academic Year

Michael F. Young	Chair
Thomas Abbott (part of Fall 2015)	CA3
Joseph Abramo	CA4
Pamela Bedore (Senate C&CC, ex officio)	N/A
Michael Bradford	CA1
Scott Campbell	Info Lit
Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos	Sec Lang
Arthur Engler	W
Bernard Goffinet	CA3
David Gross	Q
Shabaz Khan (USG rep)	N/A
Thomas Meyer	CA3
Stephanie Milan	CA2
Olivier Morand	CA2
Gustavo Nanclares	CA1
Fatma Selampinar	Q
Eduardo Urios-Aparisi	CA4
Manuela Wagner	Sec Lang
Steven Zinn	W

Karen Piantek (Program Assistant)

GEOC Subcommittee Members 2015-2016 Academic Year

CA1 Arts & Humanities Michael Bradford, Co-Chair Gustavo Nanclares, Co-Chair	Writing Arthur Engler, Co-Chair Steven Zinn, Co-Chair Douglas Kaufman Thomas Long Beth Ginsberg
CA2 Social Sciences Olivier Morand, Co-Chair Stephanie Milan, Co-Chair David Atkin Charles Venator	Quantitative Fatma Selampinar, Co-Chair David Gross, Co-Chair Jennifer Tufts James Cole Kun Chen
CA3 Science & Technology Tom Meyer, Co-chair Bernard Goffinet, Co-Chair David Perry Richard Mancini	Information Literacy Michael F. Young, Co-Chair Scott Campbell, Co-Chair Larry Gramling Shelley Goldstein Andrea Hubbard Kathy Labadorf Carolyn Lin
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, Co-Chair Joseph Abramo, Co-Chair Mary Ellen Junda Mark Kohan	Second Language Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos, Co-Chair Manuela Wagner, Co-Chair Brian Boecherer Ken Fuchsman Rajeev Bansal