

General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) Status and Actions AY 2017-2018

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Executive Summary

The routine duties of the General Education Oversight Committee include: review of proposals to add courses to, delete courses from, and revise courses within, the General Education Curriculum; review of proposals to teach General Education courses during intensive session; fund innovative proposals in the General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition; assessment of whether the goals of General Education Curriculum components are met; and, consider whether selected courses within the curriculum are aligned with the University's criteria for General Education courses. Review of course proposals, funding of innovative course proposals, and alignment of courses continued as in prior years. An assessment of the Quantitative Literacy component of the curriculum has begun this year.

This year's additional items or activities of note included addition of representatives from the First Year Writing Program to GEOC membership, adding review of Second Language Courses, development of proposed changes to the Senate Rules and Regulations.

The General Education Curriculum and the General Education Oversight Committee

The current General Education curriculum has been in place for more than a decade. Its genesis was the Taskforce on General Education Report of 2000, which launched a transformative faculty-led initiative aimed at creating a strong undergraduate curriculum across the University. This initiative was completed and approved in 2004 for the 2005-2006 academic year; since then, there have been only minor changes to the structure of the General Education Curriculum but considerable change in implementation. As set out in Senate By-Laws, Rules, and Regulations II.C.2. General Education Requirements, the curriculum consists of four content areas (Arts and Humanities; Social Sciences; Science and Technology; Diversity and Multiculturalism) and five competencies (Computer Technology, Writing, Quantitative Skills, Second Language Proficiency, and Information Literacy). The GEOC has recommended deletion of the Computer Technology competency but this has not yet been approved by the Senate.

The General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) is formally a subcommittee of the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee. GEOC is charged with 1) setting the criteria for approving all course proposals for the Content and Competency Areas; 2) setting the criteria for entrance and exit requirements for the Competency Areas; 3) developing policy regarding the delivery of the University-wide General Education program; 4) reviewing and approving courses proposed for inclusion in the General Education Requirements; 5) determining the resources necessary to deliver the General Education Curriculum; 6) monitoring periodically courses that satisfy General Education Requirements to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria adopted by the Senate; and 7) reviewing the University-wide General Education program to ensure that its goals are being met and recommending changes to the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee when appropriate.

GEOC is a faculty committee. Voting members are chairs or co-chairs of eight GEOC Subcommittees, each corresponding to a content area or competency in the General Education curriculum. GEOC also has an undergraduate student member, a position that was not filled this year. Two non-voting ex-officio members of the GEOC represent the Quantitative Center and the Writing Center, which support student and faculty development in competencies identified as particularly crucial to the success of general education. New representation from the First Year Writing Program has been added this year. A representative of the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee also serves as a non-voting ex-officio member of the GEOC. GEOC's current composition departs in several ways from that set out in Senate By-Laws on General Education (Senate By-Laws II.C.2.). There is presently no Computer Technology subcommittee nor is there an Assessment subcommittee; there is no graduate student representative.

First Year Writing

Chair Schultz has asked the Director and Associate Director of the First Year Writing Program to meet with GEOC as ex officio nonvoting members, so that the committee can be advised of concerns of and developments within their program. This addition has been described to the Senate Executive, and is proposed in amendments to the Senate Rules and Regulations.

Review of Second Language Courses

Chair Schultz has asked co-chairs of the Second Language Subcommittee to discuss with departments that provide Second Language courses the potential for providing learning outcomes and course criteria that would generalize across all second language courses within the General Education curriculum (i.e., those that are in the first year of study). These goals and criteria would bring this component of the General Education curriculum to the same level of specificity and potential for assessment as the other components of the curriculum.

In a similar vein, the Second Language Subcommittee is now reviewing course action requests for second language courses that are in the General Education curriculum. For unclear reasons these courses had not historically been routed through GEOC.

Discussions of changes to the goals and structure of the General Education Curriculum

Status

A Task Force was convened in the 2015-2016 academic year, following a charge by the University Senate Executive Committee to the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee to conduct an in-depth assessment of the University's current General Education system. The Executive Committee asked the Curricula and Courses Committee to address the following questions: 1) To what degree are the goals of the General Education program being met? 2) What is the long term impact of the General Education requirements? 3) Are the current goals for General Education requirements appropriate for the 21st century university? 4) Are revisions in goals needed? 5) Do the content areas as currently constructed meet the needs of our evolving society? 6) [Do any] content areas within GER need to be revised, deleted and/or [should any] content areas be added?

The task force performed analysis of peer and aspirant institutions, conducted focus groups of students and faculty, and disseminated online surveys to students, faculty and alumni. Their findings culminated in a set of recommendations that were modified into a resolution that was approved by the Senate in its meeting of 5 December 2016. The Senate charged the Curricula and Courses Committee to act on the report's recommendations by: 1) Doing a better job of communicating the values and the importance of General Education to all constituencies involved, including students, faculty and advisors; 2) Developing a single landing site webpage devoted to general education; 3) Restating the broad goals of General Education with clearer and more forceful language; 4) Investigating further the possibility of changing the General Education requirements; 5) Seeking ways to address students' desire for training in life skills, while clearly distinguishing such training from the mission of general education. In the resolution, the Senate also urged the University to: 1) Establish a governing body for assessment at the university level; 2) Provide additional support to faculty who teach General Education courses, including TA support for large lectures and resources on how to teach General Education courses.

Coincident with work of the 2015-2016 Task Force, a grassroots effort began to promote addition of an environmental component to the curriculum. The proposal to effect such an addition appeared as a motion to revise the General Education Rules and Regulations in the Senate meeting of 5 December 2016, the same meeting in which the Task Force's recommendations were approved. The Senate revised the motion to revise the Rules and Regulations, instead referring the matter to the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee with the charge that it "investigate ways of incorporating an environmental literacy requirement into the university's General Education program."

Actions 2017-2018

GEOC has embarked on several initiatives in response to the Task Force Report and concomitant Senate recommendations. These are pushing forward on two fronts: there is a renewed effort to stimulate dialogue about General Education across the University, and first

steps have been taken towards comprehensive consideration of the goals and structure of General Education.

The GEOC initiated multiple lines of communication about General Education. This year, chair Schultz continued communicating with all faculty teaching a General Education course at the beginning of each semester, reminding them of the goals of General Education and thanking them for their role in contributing to it. He presented on the value of the General Education curriculum at several venues, notably at an Advisor's retreat in August of 2017, and at New Faculty Orientation. He continues to staff a booth at open house events for prospective or admitted students.

Deeper consideration of the General Education curriculum and how its purpose is being communicated has been largely taken over by groups that are outside of GEOC. Addition of an Environmental Literacy requirement is discussed below. A broader consideration of the General Education curriculum as a whole is being discussed by the Δ Gen Ed Task Force, that has been meeting since November of 2017. This group is providing a separate report to the Senate.

The Senate approved a motion in February 2018 to add Environmental Literacy to the General Education curriculum in such a way that it would not add to General Education requirements (meaning no additional credits). Means by which this new component can be implemented have been discussed by a General Educational Environmental Literacy Task Force. This group is providing a separate report to the Senate.

General Education in Senate By Laws, Rules, and Regulations

Status

Senate Rules and Regulations pertaining to GEOC (also referred to in prior annual reports, and posted on the GEOC website, as 'Guidelines') have undergone minor revisions since their approval in 2004. Some of the language is devoted to the initial implementation of the General Education Curriculum, and some concerns philosophy or principle rather than rules or regulations.

Actions 2017-2018

GEOC has completed comprehensive revisions of Senate Rules and Regulations pertaining to General Education and passed these along to the Senate Scholastic Standards and Curricula and Courses Committees. Some of the changes reflect proposed changes in the structure of General Education. For example, last year's GEOC recommendations to delete the Computer Competency and revise the Information Literacy have not yet been reviewed by the Senate and will appear in the revision. Many of the changes are designed to streamline the Rules and Regulations, eliminating text that pertains to initial implementation and eliminating points of principle. Rather than expunging these points of principle from the record, they will be presented as Senate Policy. The revisions may be presented to the Senate in its one remaining meeting of the 2017-2018 academic year.

Assessment of General Education components

Status

Components of the General Education curriculum (but not the curriculum as a whole) have been assessed to varying degrees. Assessment is conducted in a four-phase framework that was outlined in the GEOC Annual Report of 2009-2010. Briefly, assessment of the content area or competency begins with inquiry into whether key courses identify student learning outcomes that are aligned with General Education goals, followed by communications with faculty and students, development of tools to assess learning outcomes, measurement of student learning based on classroom work in key courses, and concludes with dissemination of assessment tools to other courses and recommendations of changes to instruction based on assessment findings. Progress through the phases has not been uniform (see table 1 of Task Force report and associated text). Two content areas are at initial stages only; none have completed all four phases. In contrast, W courses have been subjected to rigorous assessment in selected academic programs (W task force, 2011; see also “Assessment of Student Writing in 1-Credit W Courses at UConn: Findings from Allied Health, Animal Science, Economics, and Nutritional Sciences”, 2014).

Actions 2017-2018

In 2017-2018, GEOC initiated assessment of the Q competency. The process is still within Phase I, in which key courses are being identified. GEOC is particularly interested in the Q competency courses that are taken by students whose majors are outside of quantitative fields of study, as these courses are viewed a crucial for providing students a framework for quantitative understanding they will not get in other courses they take at the University.

Course Additions, Revisions, Deletions

Status

The General Education curriculum contains an estimated 509 content area courses and 541 writing and quantitative competency courses (Table 1). The first number was calculated as total courses across content areas minus the courses with multiple content areas (153). The second number was calculated as total of Q and W courses minus courses with two competencies (2). The number of courses fell slightly content areas and competencies because the active course lists were purged of those archived by the Office of the Registrar.

Courses with CA4 and W designations have few 1000-level courses, and many 3000- and 4000-level courses, relative to other content areas or competencies. There continue to be relatively few 2000-level courses in any content area or competency; however, the number of 2000-level courses did increase in most areas, most significantly in CA1 (from 36 to 57) and CA4 (from 14 to 27). CA3-Lab also added its first ever 2000-level course, one that fulfills the Honors Core requirement for Honors students.

Actions 2017-2018

As of the end of March 2018 in AY 2017-2018, 62 proposals were received (14 fewer than last year). These proposals have so far resulted in the addition of 20 new courses to the curriculum,

revision of 15 existing courses, and dropping of 1 course (Table 2). Five of the new courses involved adding cross-listings to existing courses. Four courses requested permission to be offered in intensive session; three were granted full permission, and one was granted provisional approval for one semester. Twenty two of the 62 proposals are still in the review process.

The GEOC has agreed that archived or inactive courses that have not been taught for five years or more do not need to be listed as part of the General Education course list in advising audit sheets or on the website.

Table 1. Numbers of courses now approved for the General Education curriculum (as of April 2, 2018 Senate meeting). The table 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. Since some courses are included in more than one category, the actual totals are less than the sum of the individual categories.

Content Area/Competency	1000-level courses 2017-18	2000-level courses 2017-18	Total # of courses 2017-18	Percentage at 1000-level	Percentage at 2000-level
CA1 Arts & Humanities	105	57	238	44%	23%
CA2 Social Sciences	42	12	83	51%	14%
CA3 Science & Technology	25	7	34	82%	18%
CA3 Science & Technology – Lab	31	1	32	97%	3%
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism	32	27	150	21%	18%
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism – Int'l	49	21	125	39%	17%
*Total content area courses	284	125	662	43%	19%
Q Quantitative Competency	41	21	79	52%	27%
W Writing Competency	25	69	464	5%	15%
**Total competency courses	66	90	543	12%	17%

* Actual totals are less than the number of content area courses listed as some CA4 courses are also CA1, CA2 or CA3.

** Actual totals are less than the number of skill courses listed as some courses are both Q and W.

Table 2. Course additions, revisions and deletions.

Content Area/Competency	Additions	Revisions	Deletions
CA1 Arts & Humanities	10	3	0
CA2 Social Sciences	1	1	0
CA3 Science & Technology	1	1	0
CA3 Science & Technology – Lab	1	1	0
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism	5	4	0

CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism – Int'l	3	2	0
Q Quantitative Competency	0	0	0
W Writing Competency	12	8	1

Intensive Session Offerings

Status

The GEOC reviews proposals to offer existing General Education courses in intensive sessions (4 weeks or less). Courses are approved either fully or provisionally, depending on the measure of assurance GEOC has that the General Education 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 has been less inclined to issue provisional approvals but has instead opted for full approvals in all cases when appropriate; courses that are in question may simply be declined or sent back for revision. Since 2005, GEOC has approved 76 intensive session proposals, has given provisional approval to 7 proposals (1 of which has since been granted full approval), and has rejected 8 proposals.

Actions 2017-2018

In 2017-2018, GEOC approved 4 intensive session proposals. Breaking with more recent practices, the committee provisionally approved one course for a single offering in the Winter intensive session. The course was a 1-credit Writing (W) course, and it was granted permission to run with an enrollment cap of one (1) person. Only two other W courses have ever been approved for intensive session, and the committee is generally disinclined to consider most W courses for intensive session. GEOC made a temporary exception for this one given its special circumstances, the low credit hours, and the single-person enrollment cap.

General Education Course Substitutions and Transfers

Status

There are two processes for reviewing and approving substitutions for General Education courses. Most substitutions are made at the School or College level (73% in 2015-2016); of these, most are for transfer students who completed coursework at their previous institution and coursework completed abroad. General Education credits in these cases are carried in a generic course code. The remainder of the substitutions are made at the University level through the Academic Adjustments Committee, for students with a significant disability whose documentation and educational history provide compelling evidence of an inability to complete graduation expectations. The Registrar’s office kindly supplies GEOC with a list of all substitutions made for enrolled students during the academic year. In the previous two academic years, the total number of substitutions were 176 (2015-2016) and 230 (2016-2017).

Another source of General Education credits is through the Early College Experience (ECE) program. These are University of Connecticut courses taught by high school teachers throughout the State under the supervision of University departments. Numbers of ECE-related General Education substitutions are provided by the ECE program; they provide data on course substitutions granted for students matriculating to UConn in the Fall semester, for ECE courses during the year prior to their matriculation. Note that the limitation to ECE courses taken only in the previous year means that the effective number of General Education course substitutions is therefore greater than the data provided by ECE indicate. There are no W ECE substitutions. Over all content areas and the Q competency, there were 1888 and 1493 substitutions for the previous matriculating classes of Fall 2016 and Fall 2015 respectively.

Actions 2017-2018

After spiking to 230 in 2017, only 149 substitutions were granted by schools and colleges in 2018 (Table 3). The greatest number of substitutions are granted in CA4.

Table 3. Category Substitutions by School or College 2017-18.

Sch/Col	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA3-L	CA4	CA4-Int'l	Q	W	2 nd Lang	Total
ACES										0
AGHNR	4	2		1	6	1		6		19
BUSN		1		5	4	1				11
CLAS		1	2	12		1	7	1	17	41
CTED				1	1	2		1	2	7
EDUC	4				3	3	1			11
EGBU										0
ENGR	5	7			8	12				32
FNAR	1	2			1	6		3	3	16
NURS		1			3					4
PHAR	2				3	2		1		8
Total	16	13	2	19	29	28	8	12	22	149

After climbing each year by one quarter to one third since 2014, ECE substitutions granted for the Fall 2017 cohort of students entering UConn were down by just over 100 from last year (Table 4). In particular, there were exactly 100 fewer Q substitutions this year. Substitutions for CA4 and CA4-Int did increase slightly while all other areas declined. As always, there were no W substitutions.

Table 4. ECE transfers into General Education – 2016-17 ECE Cohort admitted Fall 2017 at UConn.

Content Area/Competency	Substitutions
CA1 Arts & Humanities	194
CA2 Social Sciences	167
CA3 Science & Technology	104
CA3 Science & Technology – Lab	565
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism	21
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism – Int'l	24
Q Quantitative Competency	698
W Writing Competency	0
Total	1773

General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition

Status

The annual General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition (also known as the Provost's 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 General Education. The competition to fund new courses was not held in 2015-2016 but resumed in 2016-2017. At that time the maximum award was adjusted upwards to \$7500.

Actions 2017-2018

The competition changed from a two-year grant to a one-year renewable grant this year, partially due to concerns about encumbering money in future fiscal years, and partially to allow GEOC greater leeway to assess the progress of awardees before additional funds are offered.

In 2017-18, three course proposals were awarded funding, and one course from the 2016-17 cohort was awarded a second year of funding (Table 5).

Table 5. Recipients of General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition.

Proposer(s)	Course #	Course Title	General Education	New or Revised
Cummings, Lindsay	DRAM 3130	Women in Theatre	CA4, CA1 (pending)	Revised
Kleinman, Jamie	PSYC 1100	Department of Psychological Science	CA3	Revised
Kumar, Challa	CHEM 3170W	Technical Communication	W	Revised
Brenick et al. (2 nd year)	HDFS 3141	Developmental Approaches to Intergroup Relations and Victimization	CA2, CA4	Revised

General Education Course Alignment

Status

GEOC's charge includes "monitoring periodically courses that satisfy General Education requirements to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria adopted by the Senate". Given the large number of courses that comprise the General Education Curriculum, it is not possible for the GEOC to examine each course. It instead has developed a stratified sampling design, wherein courses are chosen within each subject area that is revisited on a six-year cycle. (Initially a five-year cycle was envisioned, but GEOC redesigned the plan this year in accommodating the large number of subject areas within the LCL department). Within each subject area, courses are selected by consultation between the GEOC and the department according to a combination of factors such as enrollments, content area and competency designations, and regional campus offerings. Details on the course selection process are described in earlier GEOC annual reports.

Information on each selected course is provided by the department. Information for every selected course includes instructional pattern, the professional rank of instructors, and at least a sample of recent syllabi. Additional information is submitted according to content area and/or competency, so that the GEOC can assess whether the selected course continues to be consistent with the criteria for each component of the General Education Curriculum.

This monitoring process has multiple benefits that justify the resources of time and funds required. Over the years, GEOC acquires information on how well the components of the General Education Curriculum continue to follow the guidelines that have been set out for it. For departments, the process is an occasion to reconsider their General Education offerings, and frequently results in proposals to add, revise or delete courses. For this reason the process is referred to as an alignment. Historically, if a course is determined by the GEOC to not be

aligned, no action is taken beyond identifying specific issues with the department, and notifying the University community.

Actions 2017-2018

Eighteen courses were submitted for alignment this year (Table 6). As has been the case in recent years, the GEOC found that all content area and Q courses were aligned upon review of the material submitted by departments, but that some W courses do not align for various reasons.

Table 6. Courses reviewed for alignment.

Subject Area(s) ¹	Course Number	Course Title	Content Area and/or Competency	Aligns?
ANSC	1645	The Science of Food	CA3	Y
ANSC	3312W	Scientific Writing in Comparative Exercise Physiology	W	Y
CHIN	1121	Traditional Chinese Culture	CA1, CA4-INT	Y/Y
CLSC	1101	Classics of World Literature I	CA1, CA4-INT	Y/Y
GERM	1171	The German Film	CA1, CA4-INT	Y/Y
GERM	3261W	German Film and Culture	CA1, CA4, W	Y/Y/N
HCMI	4997W	Senior Thesis in Health Care Management and Insurance Studies	W	Y
HDFS	1070	Individual and Family Development	CA2	Y
HDFS	2001	Diversity Issues in Human Development and Family Studies	CA4	Y
HDFS 2	2004W	Research Methods in Human Development and Family Studies	W	N
HRTS	1007	Introduction to Human Rights	CA2, CA4	Y/Y
ILCS	1149	Cinema and Society in Contemporary Italy	CA1, CA4	Y/Y
ILCS	3260W	Italian Cinema	W	Partially
JOUR	2000W	Newswriting I	W	N
MARN	1003	Introduction to Oceanography with Laboratory	CA3	Y
MARN 3	3003Q	Environmental Reaction and Transport	Q	Y
SPAN	1010	Contemporary Spanish Culture and Society through Film	CA1, CA4	Y/Y
SPAN 3	3240W	Advanced Spanish Composition	W	Y

¹ Several subject areas were due for alignment but submitted no courses for one of several reasons: 1) there were no eligible courses to review, 2) the GEOC Chair granted exemption because the department plans to delete or retire the course(s) selected, or 3) the department requested deferment until next year based on extenuating circumstances. These subject areas, not ordered according to the reasons listed, were BADM and ENGR.

GEOC Committee Membership, 2017-2018 Academic Year

Name	Position
Joseph Abramo	CA4 co-chair
Lisa Blansett	First Year Writing
Michael Bradford	CA1 co-chair
Brenda Brueggemann	First Year Writing
Baki Cetegen	TBA
James Cole	Q Competency co-chair
Michael Darre	Senate C&CC
Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos	2nd Language co-chair
Arthur Engler	W competency co-chair
Debarchana Ghosh	CA2 co-chair
Beth Ginsberg	W Competency co-chair
Bernard Goffinet	CA3 co-chair
David Gross	Q Competency co-chair
Alvaro Lozano-Robledo	Quantitative Learning Center
Karen C. P. McDermott	Program Assistant
Thomas Meyer	CA3 co-chair
Michael Morrell	CA2 co-chair
Gustavo Nanclares	CA1 co-chair
Eric Schultz	Chair
Anji Seth	Info Lit co-chair
Kathleen Tonry	Writing Center
Eduardo Urios-Aparisi	CA4 co-chair
Manuela Wagner	2nd Language co-chair

GEOC Subcommittee Membership, 2017-2018 Academic Year

<p>CA1 Arts & Humanities Michael Bradford (DRAM), Co-Chair Gustavo Nanclares (LCL), Co-Chair Rebecca Rumbo (ENGL)</p>	<p>Writing Arthur Engler (NURS), Co-Chair Beth Ginsberg (POLS), Co-Chair Douglas Kaufman (EDCI) Thomas Long (NURS)</p>
<p>CA2 Social Sciences Debarchana Ghosh (GEOG), Co-Chair Michael Morrell (POLS), Co-Chair David Atkin (COMM) Elizabeth Holzer (SOCI) Kenneth Lachlan (COMM)</p>	<p>Quantitative James Cole (MCB), Co-Chair David Gross (MATH), Co-Chair Jennifer Tufts (SLHS) Kun Chen (STAT)</p>
<p>CA3 Science & Technology Tom Meyer (NRE), Co-chair Bernard Goffinet (EEB), Co-Chair David Perry (PHYS) Richard Mancini (ANSC) Lisa Park Boush (GEOG)</p>	<p>Information Literacy Anji Seth (GEOG), Co-Chair TBD, Co-Chair Scott Campbell (ENGL) Shelley Goldstein (Library) Andrea Hubbard (PHAR) Kathy Labadorf (Library) Carolyn Lin (COMM)</p>
<p>CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism Eduardo Urios-Aparisi (LCL), Co-Chair Joseph Abramo (EDCI), Co-Chair Mary Ellen Junda (MUSI) Mark Kohan (EDCI)</p>	<p>Second Language Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos (LCL), Co-Chair Manuela Wagner (LCL), Co-Chair Brian Boecherer (Early College Exp.) Rajeev Bansal (ECE)</p>