



## GEOC Meeting December 11, 2017

*Members in **BOLD** were in attendance:*

**Eric Schultz – Chair, (Karen Piantek – Admin), Joseph Abramo, Lisa Blansett, Brenda Brueggemann, Michael Bradford, Baki Cetegen, James Cole, Michael Darre (Ex-Officio), Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos, Arthur Engler, Beth Ginsberg, Bernard Goffinet, Debs Ghosh, David Gross, Alvaro Lozano-Robledo, Thomas Meyer, Michael Morrell, Gustavo Nanclares, Anji Seth, Kathleen Tonry (Ex-Officio), Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, Manuela Wagner**

Regrets: Joe Abramo

Meeting was called to order at 1:33pm.

### 1. Preliminaries

- A. LUNCH
- B. Call-ins: Dial 1-800-857-9702, passcode 46672

### 2. Welcome and Regrets

### 3. Past and Future

- a. Minutes of November 29, 2017 meeting: and Karen comment on minutes going forward
  - The question arose in another committee about whether names should be recorded in the minutes in reference to specific discussion points. Sources on standard practice indicate no. Moving forward, meeting minutes will reference only the general contours of discussions rather than individual contributions, unless otherwise requested. Names will only be noted for motions and seconds, when people volunteer, or when members or guests are presenting important information that needs to be referenced back to a source.
- b. Next Meeting: January 24, 2018 at 10:00am

### 4. Chair's Report

- A. ΔGE Working Group
  - The group has met twice since GEOC last met. Members will develop a proposal to be launched in March.
- B. Senate motion on Environmental Literacy ('ELSenate12.4.pdf')
  - Environmental Literacy (EL) discussions are now operating on multiple fronts: GEOC, ΔGE, and University Senate. A new motion was presented on the Senate floor, a simplified version of the one presented earlier. This motion would cause a change to Senate by-laws, rules, and regulations, so it must be discussed at one meeting and voted on at the next. Action will therefore be held to the February meeting.

### 5. Subcommittee Reports

- A. W Report ('GEOC W Competency Subcommittee Report 12-11-17')
  - a. AMST/HIST 3502/W Colonial America: Native Americans, Slaves, and Settlers, 1492-1760 (W) [Create an AMST cross-listing]

- The W subcommittee recommended that the proposal be sent back due to problems in the syllabus. The Chair asked the subcommittee instead to communicate with the proposer about the problems in the syllabus, and they agreed to do so.

## 6. Alignment Reports

- A. No reports

## 7. Old Business

- A. Environmental Literacy motion – *Dave Wagner, Guest* (see also ‘Rationale for adding Environmental Literacy to General Education’, ‘Environmental courses capacity analysis’, ‘Motions regarding Environment gen ed\_2’)

- Dave Wagner attended the GEOC meeting to present briefly on Environmental Literacy (EL) and answer questions. He spoke about why there is an urgency to get EL into the curriculum; environmental issues have the potential to globally affect nations and destabilize many countries. There is also a great deal of social injustice in the issue of climate change. UConn and President Herbst are moving forward with environmental changes to the university, and there is a desire to position UConn as a “front-leader in environmental literacy.” EL could conceivably be part of UConn’s brand.
- The Senate will be interested to see how GEOC feels about the EL proposal, but that may not necessarily guide their decision.
- There was a question about students who have actually graduated with EL courses on their transcripts. Initial data suggests that about 23% of students have taken an EL-related course based on the last graduating class.
- There was concern that adding EL will take away from other Gen Ed curriculum, especially in the sciences. It was argued that this initiative will affect all disciplines, not just science. The main focus may really be business and policy.
- It was felt by some that one 3-credit course does not create true literacy and that taking one class will have little, if any, impact on the world, so this initiative is more about UConn making a statement. There was discussion about how the mission of the university can address this issue in a broader context.
- Dave Wagner concluded his visit.

**T. Meyer moved to pick up the proposal from the table. M. Morrell seconded. The motion carried with one abstention.**

- Members questioned the accuracy of the 23% figure about students taking EL courses. There is no additional info at this time, but there was acknowledgement these numbers did not come from OIRE and that do they not include BIOL courses. The number may go up, but it probably won’t go above 50%. There was concern that many courses may now also have to try and accommodate Gen Ed students in addition to students who need the courses for their major.
- There was disagreement about whether we currently have the capacity to accommodate this proposal. There is about a 14,000-seat capacity just for Storrs over two years, but that does not include regional campuses, and any increases would mean UConn would not have capacity.
- UConn should certainly consider capacity, but current capacity should not necessarily be a constraint. We have never considered capacity when taking curricular action; programs do not

always consider capacity when they make changes, and they just make adjustments as needed. Capacity will always be an issue, so the question is really whether we address it now or later.

- The problem is really with EL as a requirement. Without EL being a requirement, there is plenty of capacity.
- Committee members wanted clarification on the effects of their actions today. Ultimately it will be up to the Senate, but there are Senate members who will follow what GEOC recommends.
- It was generally agreed that the one 3-credit course being proposed will have little impact overall, but one member argued that moving forward with EL in this limited capacity is an opportunity to take the first baby step toward a larger initiative. Moving to add EL may also spur some good innovation across campus to address the issue of capacity.
- One member suggested that this was mainly a political statement and that the general message from the Senate is “we are going to do this.” The implication is that GEOC needs to endorse the proposal and the details can be figured out later.
- The group questioned what would happen if the motion before the Senate failed. The issue would go back to the ΔGE group. There was additional discussion and disagreement about whether this initiative is a “done deal.” The wording of the original Senate charge was discussed.
- One member summarized that everyone in the room seems to be in favor of EL, but there is doubt that this initiative can be implemented in a meaningful way. Can GEOC make a statement that supports EL without recommending a course of action? Members wanted clarification on whether they were being asked to endorse the proposal or reject it outright. No, there are several options. The committee reviewed the procedural options.
- The committee looked at alternate option #5 that makes the EL course an option rather than a requirement.

**D. Ghosh moved to amend the motion on floor to the following: “Given current teaching capacity in environmental courses at the university and the branch campuses, it is the sense of this committee that the best option for implementing an environmental literacy component in the General Education curriculum is to create an E designation for current general education courses and encourage students to take at least one such course.” J. Cole seconded.**

- There was more discussion of E capacity.

**M. Morrell motioned to table the amended motion given time constraints. D. Ghosh seconded. The motion to table was approved unanimously.**

- B. GEOC Budget Report (‘GEOC Budget Report\_FY 2018’)
  - Deferred until the next meeting.
- C. GEOC Review of Second Language Courses (no updates)
- D. Q Assessment (no updates)

## **8. Course Action Requests**

- A. PNB 3264W Molecular Principles of Physiology, #3681 (W) [Revise Pre-reqs]

*Note: This course was placed on hold pending contact with the proposer about the need for a W statement/F clause in the syllabus.*

- B. ECON 2500W Writing in Economics, (W) [Intensive session]

*Note: This course was placed on hold pending consultation with the proposer on the following: 1) the peer review mentioned in the syllabus, 2) the number of revised pages, and 3) whether there is enough time to complete the draft/revision process. Updates were received.*

- The committee felt that the revisions made were acceptable, but there were still concerns about offering the course for general availability in intensive session on an ongoing basis. There was general agreement that a one-time provisional offering would be appropriate.

**M. Morrell motioned to provisionally approve ECON 2500W for one offering in Winter 2018. M. Wagner seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

- C. AMST/ENGL 2274W Disability in American Lit and Culture, #3457 (CA1, CA4, W) [Add AMST cross-listing]

**M. Morrell motioned to send the course to Senate C&C.**

- There was discussion of whether the assigned pages satisfied the W requirement. There were inconsistencies in the syllabus and CAR form, so this is unclear.

**M. Morrell withdrew the motion. The course was referred to the W subcommittee only.**

- D. AMST/ENGL 2276/W American Utopias and Dystopias, # 4515 (CA1, W) [New cross-listed course]

**The course was referred to the CA1 and W subcommittees.**

- E. AMST/ENGL 3265W Seminar in American Studies, #3843 (W) [revise title and description]

- Action was deferred due to time constraints.

- F. AMST/ENGL/HIST 2207 Empire and U.S. Culture, #3841 (CA1, CA4) [New cross-listed course]

**The course was referred to the CA1 and CA4 subcommittees.**

- G. AMST/URBN 2400 City and Community in Film, #4816 (CA1) [Add AMST cross-listing]

**M. Morrell motioned to send the course to Senate C&C. A. Engler seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.**

- H. EEB 2222 Plants in a Changing World, #4856 (CA3) [New course]

**The course was referred to the CA3 subcommittee.**

- I. ENGL 2013W Introduction to Writing, #3962 (W) [New course]

**The course was referred to the W subcommittee.**

- J. HIST 2020 Pyramids, Pirates, and the Pōlis: The Ancient Mediterranean, #5018 (CA1, CA4-Int) [New Course]

**The course was referred to the CA1 and CA4 subcommittees.**

- K. HIST/AFRA/LLAS 3619/W History of the Caribbean, #4958 (CA1, CA4-Int, W) [New cross-listed course] – New W proposal, send to W

**The course was referred to the W subcommittee only.**

- L. MARN 3801W Marine Sciences and Society, #4720 (W) [Level change]
- Action was deferred due to time constraints.

- M. MCB 2612 Honors Core: Microbe Hunters-Crowdsourcing Antibiotic Discovery, #3284 (New CA3-Lab)

**The course was referred to the CA3 subcommittee.**

- N. PHIL 2410 Know Thyself, #4756 (CA1) [New course]

**The course was referred to the CA1 subcommittee.**

- O. POLS 3610/W American Politics in Film, #4476 (CA2, W) [New course]

**The course was referred to the CA2 and W subcommittees.**

- P. SOCI 1001 Introduction to Sociology (CA2) [Intensive session]
- Action was deferred due to time constraints.

**9. New Business**

- A. Information Literacy Subcommittee Report (Pending)

**10. Coming Up this Year**

- A. Study Abroad and CA4 Gen Ed  
B. Presentations from First-Year Writing & Honors (Spring)

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Piantek McDermott  
GEOC Program Assistant