General Education Committee

Final Report to Academic Senate

June 2014

**Membership:**

Voting faculty:

Catherine Cucinella, Julie Jameson, Sheldon Lou (Spring 2014), Yvonne Meulemans, Joely Proudfit, Marilyn Ribble, Zhiwei Zhao (Fall 2013), Marshall Whittlesey (chair).

Non-voting:

Pamela Bell (IITS), Regina Eisenbach (Academic Programs), Andres Favela (Undergraduate Advising), Sharon Hamill (GE Assessment Coordinator, Fall 2013)

Gretchen Sampson (Academic Programs), while not an `official’ member of the committee, attended meetings and drafted minutes for the committee.

The committee had a difficult start this year due to the fact that only four seats were filled, and no one was yet chair. GEC suffers from a significant amount of membership turnover from year to year.

Meetings: GEC met weekly on Tuesdays in the fall for 90 minutes, and weekly on Thursdays in the spring from 10:00-11:30. It became clear in the fall that GEC should always make its weekly meetings after EC’s weekly Wednesday meeting (Thursday makes the most sense for GEC.) The reason is that in order for proposed policy to move efficiently back and forth between EC and GEC, GEC has to meet after EC meets, but before items are due for the EC agenda (usually 8:00 Monday morning.)

**Work completed/drafted:**

Academic Senate approved a new GE mission statement for the GE program in the spring term.

GEC drafted policy on inclusion of learning outcomes in GE course syllabi, but then yielded to a combined effort with APC to revise the syllabus guidelines. This effort stalled during the spring term and was not completed.

GEC engaged in a comprehensive review/recertification of the lower division GE curriculum, along with area E. The committee first solicited in the fall of 2013 a list, due November 15, 2013, from all departments and programs of courses which they wished to continue as GE courses. Then the committee called on these departments to fill out the new lower division GE forms, due January 29, 2014. The departments and programs responded with a list of 107 courses proposed for certification/recertification (two of which were new.) By the end of the spring term, GE forms had been submitted for 62 of these courses. GEC considered all of these forms during the spring, and certified/recertified 41, returned 20 for revision, and confirmed the existing special status of one course (GEW 50, which is not officially a GE course, but has a special relationship with GEW 101, an A2 course.) A number of the 41 recertified courses were first returned to the proposer for more information, and later approved. GEC still has not received forms for 45 courses, but could not have processed any more of them in the time available.

Instructions for filling out the new lower division GE forms were completed and posted online.

GEC discussed surveying the GE curriculum for diversity-related content and proceeded to address this matter in two ways. First, as part of the lower division recertification, the forms had two questions about diversity. Second, the campus decided to hire Halualani and Associates, Inc, to do a comprehensive study of diversity on campus, of which GE would be a part.

GEC studied nine proposed GE Program Student Learning Outcomes and forwarded them to Senate for comment (none were received.) GEC will proceed with them as a working document (but not as official policy) in the sense that we will assess them as we can, but change them if circumstances demand it. Currently no course stands required to achieve these outcomes, but each outcome on the list seemed likely to be achieved in many courses. The outcomes would be changed if they were not achieved broadly enough in the curriculum, or if their assessment turned out to be difficult. At some point, a spreadsheet - mapping what courses or areas are associated with certain program learning outcomes – is planned so that future assessors can determine what courses achieve which program learning outcomes.

A GE town hall on assessment occurred on February 11, 2014.

GEC briefly studied how to articulate GE credit with CLEP exams. It certified non-English language CLEP exams for the C3 requirement, but had no time to look at others.

GEC agreed to continue the so-called ‘soft enforcement’ of the 60 unit rule for upper division GE. Currently policy demands that students achieve 60 units before getting credit for an upper division GE course. This policy is inconvenient in the event that a student is expected to take such a GE course for a major prior to attaining 60 units. The soft enforcement is as follows: students are advised not to take upper division GE before attaining 60 units and are denied credit if they have less than 50 units. Undergraduate Advising continues to seek information on this issue so that GEC can make a decision in the near future about the long term status of this policy.

GEC empanelled a Golden Four Task Force to study challenges surrounding raising the minimum grade in Golden Four courses from D- to C. The task force did not finish this task this spring and is scheduled to resume in the fall of 2014.

In an effort to meet the 120 unit degree mandate, Nursing inquired about alternative ways of satisfying the area E requirement, and proposed a manner by which nursing students could be considered as satisfying area E by completion of the entire nursing program. Instead, GEC decided to certify NURS 210/211 for area E. NURS 210 is a 2 unit course, and NURS 211 is a 1 unit corequisite.

GEC created an appeal process by which students who successfully complete BIOL 210 but decide not to continue to BIOL 211 could be certified as having cleared the B2 requirement. The motion passed was: *students who take and pass CHEM 150 & BIOL 210 with a C or better can petition the BIOL department and GEC for B2 credit*. Language to this effect is to be placed in the university catalogue. The GEC granted such credit to two students in December.

A policy concerning dual listing of courses was passed by Academic Senate at its last meeting. It was amended at that meeting to say that if two courses are proposed for dual listing and at least one of them is a GE course, then GEC should be notified.

In May, GEC discussed lessons learned regarding the new forms, and what changes ought to be made in the future. Suggestions included:

* in Part A, include in columns 2 and 3 in the header another sentence asking the proposer to give examples of course content, and an example of a sort of thing a student would be required to do to achieve a particular learning outcome. Indicate that ‘see syllabus’ is not an acceptable answer.
* Review the directions document
* Consider changing ‘course content’ to ‘subject matter’ in Part A
* Put program learning outcomes on forms and ask about assessment
* Give examples of well-written forms
* Modify GE syllabus checklist to indicate that the GE learning outcomes for the AREA should be cut and pasted onto the syllabus
* Add to the forms where the handbook/instructions are located

**New GE courses certified:**

D7: ENVS 100

CC: HIST 304B, GBST 390-4,WMST 300-22

DD: ID 370-12, HIST 304A, ANTH 379, COMM 410, WMST 300-21

E: NURS 210/211

**Suggested work for 2014-2015:**

Complete the lower division/area E recertification process. Decertify courses not submitted for recertification.

Make appropriate modifications to lower division forms. Begin to require the upper division GE student learning outcomes on all proposals for upper division GE certifications, perhaps as an addendum to the forms.

Study what it would take to do a review of upper division GE courses. Survey faculty to determine the number of courses that would be submitted for recertification at upper division, decide what would be required for recertification of a course, and formulate a plan for execution of the recertification.

Coordinate assessment of GE program student learning outcomes.

Study CLEP exams for GE certification; solicit departments for input.

Empanel Golden Four task force again.

Complete effort to revise syllabus guidelines, working with APC.

Make sure the new GE mission statement is approved by the administration.

Ask Undergraduate Advising for update on soft enforcement of 60 unit requirement for upper division GE. Make plan for deciding the long term status of this policy.

Study Halualani and Associates report on diversity for what it says about GE.