General Education Program:
Five Year Review
Part I: Self Study Report
Presented to UCC
4/21/06
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4/21/06 2:00PM

Executive Summary

The General Education Review Taskforce (GERTA) was formed by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and charged by Dr. A. Edward Urichard, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, to begin the Five Year Review of the UNCG General Education Program. During the period from September 1, 2005 to February 15, 2006, the Taskforce met with a broad representation of the UNCG community, including students, advisors, and GEC Core Committee chairs. Additionally, several Open Faculty Forums and Blackboard Discussions were held to encourage open dialogue and energetic exchange of ideas. This report details the findings of our activities, plus the recommendations for actions based on those findings. It is expected that this report will constitute Part I of the General Education Review. Part II is a review by external experts, with a proposed deadline of November 1, 2006 for their report and submission to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Following receipt of the external reviewers report, a final report will be submitted by UCC to the Faculty Senate and shared with the campus.

Student achievement of GEC goals
The goals of GEC seem to be appropriate, but may not be expressed in a clear manner that can be most easily understood, communicated to students or faculty, and measured. Goals do not line up clearly with course requirements or committee structure, making it difficult to clarify in what courses students develop which goals, and to measure student achievement of those goals. GERTA recommends that the goals be realigned, a matrix of goals and courses be developed, and the governance structure be aligned with the goals.

Appropriateness of GEC goals and course offerings
UNCG delivers GEC as part of a smorgasbord of courses within various categories. This approach appears to utilize our faculty’s strengths (an extraordinary wide range of expertise and specialization within General Education). Faculty from many academic areas regularly contribute new courses that expand the scope of the different GEC categories and markers. Students have sufficient variety and quantity of courses to satisfy their GEC requirements, as the curriculum has expanded over the five year period. GERTA recommends that UNCG continue to deliver GEC curriculum with this approach.

Assessment program of student achievement
The ability to perform meaningful assessment is limited by the lack of clarity of the objectives themselves. Objectives need to be broad enough to fit the realm of "general education", however, they need to be specific enough to give the student enough guidance to understand the objectives of general education. GEC’s current goals are broad and sometimes unclear, making assessment challenging. GERTA recommends that Gen Ed
Assessment be assigned to a single ‘General Education’ committee. This committee will need to be trained in general education assessment through trips to conferences or workshops, and will work closely with the Director of Academic Assessment.

**Structure and governance of GEC**

The Oversight Plan for General Education was developed in 2001. The 10 GEC Core Committees have served well in GEC implementation and course approval. However, many parts of the Oversight Plan were never fully implemented, and the plan itself may not be the best structure for the long term health of General Education. The Taskforce recommends a restructuring of the faculty governance of General Education, with the formation of a General Education Oversight Committee made up of approximately 10 faculty from diverse disciplines. It would be charged with upholding and developing the requirements, management, and assessment of the general education curriculum at UNCG, and report to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

The Task Force also believes that Faculty on the Oversight Committee should be given the resources to attend national conferences on general education and to obtain publications, printed and on-line, on trends and innovative ideas on general education, thus ensuring that UNCG students can benefit from the best and most current philosophies available.

A primary recommendation must be to create bylaws and a procedural manual for any committee responsible for the oversight of general education. A supporting recommendation is the creation of a web page for the General Education Curriculum and its overseeing body. Such a web page would allow not only for dissemination of information but also could contain training materials for GEC members or faculty who teach GEC courses.

**Summary of Part I: Self Study Report**

The General Education Review Taskforce concludes that General Education at UNCG is, for the most part, serving students well. It appears that a broad array of courses is available, and is allowing students to meet requirements. Of primary concern is the need for an energized, committed faculty involvement in the oversight of the broad-based goals, the overall quality, and the effectiveness of the General Education program, as evidence through a meaningful assessment program. With such involvement, and with assessment evidence, the faculty oversight of General Education can assure that the program is constantly improved and updated to meet student needs in the most effective manner.
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General Education Program: Five Year Review

Self Study Completed by the
General Education Review Taskforce
April 15, 2006

Introduction

The Faculty Senate at UNCG approved the current General Education Program in 2001, with an implementation date of Fall Semester, 2002. A General Education Oversight Plan was also adopted, charging the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) as the oversight committee. The UCC is responsible for all aspects of the administration of the General Education Core, including oversight of the ten General Education Core (GEC) committees. At the time of approval of the current General Education Program, it was mandated that a review be conducted by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in 2006-2007 (once every five years). The UCC charged the General Education Review Taskforce (GERTA) with the production of a self-study report. The submission of this self-study to the UCC will conclude the work of the Taskforce, and complete the first part of a two-part review. The second part, a report of the external consultants who will respond to this report and gather additional information through a campus visit, will be concluded by November 1, 2006. At that time the complete report will be shared with the campus.

The Oversight Plan can be found in Appendix A: General Education Oversight Plan.

Charge to the Task Force

Dr. A. Edward Uprichard, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, stated our charge on August 25, 2005 to be the following:

"Under the direction of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and in cooperation with Associate Provost Kathleen Rountree, you are charged to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our General Education Program, and make recommendations for any necessary changes. The UCC has identified the following four parameters:

1) Student achievement of GEC goals
2) Appropriateness of GEC goals and course offerings
3) Assessment program of student achievement
4) Structure and governance of GEC"

The General Education Review Taskforce includes representatives from the academic units, the UCC, and the GEC Committees. Committee members and their units are listed in Appendix B.

The Task Force created subcommittees on Assessment, Curriculum, and Structure. Their reports are found in Appendices C, D, and E, respectively.
Timetables for Part I and Part II Reports


During this time, the Taskforce gathered information on the parameters of the review, which include the appropriateness of GEC goals and course offerings; student achievement of GEC goals; the system of assessment of student achievement in GEC, and the structure and governance of GEC.


Part II: On April 21, 2006, the Taskforce will conclude its work by presenting a report to UCC. This report should be considered the parallel of a “self-study” in a departmental five-year review, which is the model for this process. At this point the Taskforce will be disbanded. Part II will also begin on this date, as external reviewers will be recommended to the UCC for the next step in the process.

Part II: During the Fall 2006 semester, external reviewers will be brought in by the UCC to review the self-study, examine General Education at UNCG, and submit their report to UCC. At this point the ‘review’ process will be complete. Following receipt of the external reviewers report, a final report will be submitted by UCC to the Faculty Senate and shared with the campus. A completion date of November 1, 2006 is anticipated.

Information-Gathering Process for the Task Force

The Task Force gathered information from students, faculty, GEC committee members, and student advisors. It also reviewed documents and records including the Oversight Plan and the ‘Measuring Student Achievement’ report produced in the Fall 2004 (http://provost.uncg.edu/Underedu/content/general/MSA%20Report%20for%20Fall%202004.pdf). Various methods were used to solicit opinions and recommendations from each group. Table I summarizes our data collection from different groups, a brief group description, and directs interested readers to source documents found in various Appendices.

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Observations and Recommendations for Parameter 1:
Student achievement of GEC goals

Observations:

An understanding of the degree to which students are achieving the GEC goals as put forward in the Undergraduate Bulletin depends on two variables: 1) the clarity with which the goals are written, and 2) the effectiveness of our assessment activities. The Taskforce has identified substantial weaknesses in both these parameters.

1. The GEC committee structure, composed of ten discipline-based committees, does not align with the complete list of GEC goals. Most notably, none of the “Habits of Mind”, or the central goal of “Critical Thinking” are assigned to any committee. This may mean that important goals are not being given consideration, oversight, or assessment.

2. Feedback from students and advisors repeatedly stated that GEC was ‘too complex’ and that it was inordinately difficult to obtain the necessary courses to meet requirements. Therefore, GERTA investigated student success with “time to degree” and completion of GEC requirements. Based on a limited sample size (one year’s worth of data), these data do not indicate that there is a problem with GEC requirements impeding time to degree. Data from Institutional Research can be found in Appendix N1. However, it should be noted that “time to degree” may not be the only symptom of the complexity of the current requirements.

3. The GEC committees and UCC undertook a campus-wide assessment of GEC student goals in the “Measuring Student Achievement” project. Much useful information was gathered, informing us about student achievement. However, few actions to address student weaknesses have been proposed or taken as a consequence of that information.

Recommendations:

Recommendations for Parameter 1 are encapsulated into the recommendations regarding goals, governance structure, and assessment, found below.

Observations and Recommendations for Parameter 2:
Appropriateness of GEC goals and course offerings

Observations:

1. UNCG delivers GEC curriculum as part of a smorgasbord of courses within various categories. This approach appears to utilize our faculty’s strengths (an extraordinary wide range of expertise and specialization within General Education).
2. Faculty from many academic areas regularly contribute new courses that expand the scope of the different GEC categories and markers.

3. GEC curriculum has proliferated over the five years with few attempts to manage this growth. After being initially approved as GEC, courses have not been subsequently reviewed or examined to ensure that they continue to meet the category or marker goals, or are effective in meeting student learning objectives.

4. The multiple committee structure may be an impediment to the Development of innovative courses. The GEC course approval process is "cumbersome", especially if faculty are seeking multiple designations for a course (for example, a Historical Perspectives designation, as well as Writing Intensive and Global markers). Each committee may have different standards and requirements to which a course must conform to earn approval.

Recommendations:

1. UNCG should continue to deliver GEC curriculum as part of a smorgasbord of courses within various categories. This approach appears to meet the needs of the vast majority of our students, and is acceptable to the vast majority of our faculty.

2. The Oversight Plan calls for an evaluation of GEC courses every three years. GERTA recommends that this be implemented to ensure that the course continues to meet the category or marker goals, and that the course is effective in meeting student learning objectives.

Observations and Recommendations for Parameter 3: 
Assessment program of student achievement

Observations:

1. The ability to perform meaningful assessment is limited by the lack of clarity of the objectives themselves. Objectives need to be broad enough to fit the realm of "general education", however, they need to be specific enough to give the student enough guidance to understand the objectives of general education. GEC's current goals are broad and sometimes unclear, making assessment challenging.

2. The relationship between general education program objectives and category course activities is unclear. There is very little follow up for Gen Ed. If a class receives approval one year, it is pretty much guaranteed to have that approval the next year. Mechanisms need to be developed that, after the course approval process, ensure that the courses continue to address general education program objectives as courses evolve through different instructors.

3. Assessment activities at UNCG have been limited in the past. The recent establishment of an office of Academic Assessment and a full-time Director of Academic Assessment are important steps toward a meaningful program. However, it will also be important to train and inspire faculty to participate in general education assessment, which
may require additional budgetary support, staff support, and oversight from department chairs, deans, and above.

4. The Oversight Plan assigns responsibility for Gen Ed Assessment to the Core Committees. However, this plan has not been implementable. Nor, in our viewpoint, could it be implemented successfully. Coordination of assessment by a collection of ten committees has a high possibility of descending into chaos. Furthermore, there does not appear to be a clear avenue for analysis and usage of assessment data; the ten committees have little ability to affect curriculum in such a way as to address student weaknesses diagnosed by assessment.

Recommendations:

1. Assignment of Gen Ed Assessment to a single ‘General Education’ committee, as described in Parameter 4, below. This committee will need to be trained in gen ed assessment through trips to conferences or workshops, and will work closely with the Director of Academic Assessment. Additional funds and staff support for the General Ed committee may be necessary.

2. Development of a plan for Gen Ed. assessment that clarifies the responsibility of the Gen Ed oversight body, the UCC, the Director of Assessment, and the departments that offer Gen Ed courses.

Observations and Recommendations for Parameter 4:

Structure and governance of GEC

Observations:

1. Unlike most other universities, there is no group of faculty whose primary charge it is to act as experts on general education at UNCG. UCC’s charge is much broader, as it accepts responsibility for the entire undergraduate curriculum inventory. Thusly, there is no faculty group taking a proactive, energized role around general education. We have no faculty body whose mission is to attend national conferences on general education or to consult with peers interested in advances in general education. Thus, we have limited access and engagement in new initiatives about general education to UNCG.

2. No official bylaws and procedural manual were ever developed by the UCC for the GEC committees. This has led to a chaotic situation which has engendered a number of policy and procedural problems.

3. Despite the mandate passed by the Faculty Senate that GEC courses be reviewed every 3 years, this has not taken place. The GEC Core Committees were largely unaware of this requirement. However, they report that they can not accept this task, as they lack time, resources, or staff support to take on that huge task.
4. The structure of General Education oversight at UNCG is quite unusual in several ways: First, there is no designated "General Education" committee. A comparison of UNCG's structure with the structure of Appalachian State University and East Carolina University reveals that both those institutions have a Gen Ed committee, comprised of individuals from various disciplines. That committee reports to a broader curriculum committee, much like our UCC (please see charts in Appendix M).

Instead of a General Education committee, the structure approved by the Faculty Senate at UNCG breaks down Gen Ed oversight into ten subject-oriented committees, with a total of nearly 70 faculty serving on those committees. In the conversion of the previous gen ed program (AULER) to GEC, these committees were highly engaged in re-classifying courses. As time goes on, only the Writing and Speaking committees are now working at a high level; the other committees are examining only a few courses each year.

The structure of the ten committees itself promotes turf-protection and the development of silos. These free standing entities rarely share "best practices" developed by individual committees. Additionally, the ten committees are unable, and uncharged, to consider the broad, multi-disciplinary goals of Gen Ed, or to direct or engage in assessment activities of General Education.

The Taskforce agrees that this structure needs to be examined and possibly revised into an oversight structure that is more similar to that of ASU and ECU, and this is reflected in the subcommittee report on oversight and governance of Gen Ed. Since the governance document for General Education was originally adopted by the Faculty Senate, any changes in the structure would need Faculty Senate approval as well.

**Recommendations:**

1. A primary recommendation must be to create bylaws and a procedural manual for any committee responsible for the oversight of general education.

2. A web page for the General Education Curriculum and its overseeing body be created. Such a web page would allow not only for dissemination of information but also could contain training materials for GEC members or faculty who teach GEC courses.

3. One General Education Oversight Committee, made up of approximately 10 faculty from diverse disciplines, could be created. It would be charged with upholding and developing the requirements, management, and assessment of the general education curriculum at UNCG. It would report to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

   Faculty on the Oversight Committee would be given the resources to attend national conferences on general education and to obtain publications, printed and on-line, on trends and innovative ideas on general education, thus ensuring that UNCG students can benefit from the best and most current philosophies available.
Continuing Questions to be Considered

The governance of General Education is a continuous process, rather than a point-in-time discussion. Therefore, the taskforce raises the following questions for future consideration, and possible future improvement.

A) Should GEC (General Education Core) be renamed? Is GEC the best acronym to describe our liberal education expectations? Would a simpler acronym, such as Distribution Requirements, be better?

B) Should a stronger statement at the beginning of the GEC Section in the Undergraduate Bulletin be developed that explains clearly to students (and the UNCG community) who is responsible for GEC and why it is important? Should GEC course syllabi explain how the course meets GEC learning objectives?

   For example, "The faculty of UNCG has determined that the following Distribution Requirements are important and necessary to insure that all students receive a broad-based, liberal component to their UNCG education. This part of your education will help you develop into a productive citizen of the 21st century."

C) Should GEC contain a physical activity component? See letter from Dr. Paul Davis in Appendix L.

D) Does UNCG’s GEC fulfill the goals set forth in the AASCU “Greater Expectations” Report? If not, what changes should be made?

E) Some stakeholders are concerned about how students “learn to write” in ENG101 and WI courses; it appears that some of this learning is done by the writing center. The 2004 Measuring Student Achievement project indicated that almost 20% of students at UNCG could not write at a college level (a rating of 1 or 2), and this performance reaches almost 50% inadequacy in some units. If students focused their time on writing and writing improvement in WI courses, the writing abilities of students should improve beyond these present levels.
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Appendix A

General Education Oversight Plan
(As Approved by Faculty Senate upon implementation of current General Education Program)

The General Education Program at UNCG is a university-wide program. The Student Learning Goals apply to all students pursuing baccalaureate degrees at UNCG, and university-wide efforts are made to ensure that UNCG graduates attain these Goals, including the General Education Core (GEC) offered through courses across the university, through requirements and experiences in keeping with these goals in major programs, and through credit and non-credit activities offered through Academic Affairs and Student Life.

Administrative leadership for all general education activities is provided in the Office of the Provost by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Special Academic Initiatives (UESAI). Because the majority of general education courses are offered through the College of Arts and Sciences, the Dean of the College also plays an important leadership role.

The General Faculty and the Faculty Senate are authorized to establish and review the undergraduate curriculum, as outlined in the Constitution of the Faculty and the Handbook for Faculty. Specific responsibility for designation of courses for general education credit and for cyclical review of the general education requirements is delegated to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC). In addition, the UCC serves as the oversight committee for all aspects of the administration of the General Education Core, including oversight of the ten GEC Committees. An Assessment Committee composed of GEC Committee representatives and others to provide expertise, as needed, will be established by the UCC.

The GEC Committees are appointed by the Provost and are composed of three to seven faculty, largely from departments that teach courses in that division, but with attention to broad campus representation. The GEC Committees include:

- GEC Literature Committee
- GEC Fine Arts Committee
- GEC Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Principles Committee
- GEC Historical Perspectives Committee
- GEC Mathematics and Natural Sciences Committee
- GEC Reasoning and Discourse Committee
- GEC Writing Intensive Committee
- GEC Speaking Intensive Committee
- GEC Global and Nonwestern Perspectives Committee

The Associate Provost/UESAI works with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee to recommend faculty to the Provost to serve on the GEC Committees and to ensure that GEC course proposals are forwarded to those committees. A GEC Committee has the following responsibilities:

A. Conducting the initial review of all current courses, to include the following:

1. Developing guidelines for the category or categories assigned to the committee. These guidelines should be designed to ensure that:
   a. students in a category course will make progress toward the Student Learning Goals assigned to the category by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
   b. courses in the category have suitable breadth and foundational nature for a general education core course, although marker courses in the majors can be more specialized.

2. Reviewing all courses reassigned from AULER to categories in the General Education Program [See General Education Courses section of proposed catalog copy] by December, 2001, so that the revised lists can appear in the 2002-2003 undergraduate bulletin. This review will utilize materials submitted by departments (syllabi, descriptions of how Student Learning Goals are incorporated, etc.).
B. On an ongoing basis, carrying out the following:

1. Reviewing proposals for new courses to be included in the assigned category or categories of the General Education Core according to the guidelines developed. The GEC committee will propose approved courses to the UCC for inclusion in the GEC.

2. Playing a central role in ongoing assessment and improvement activities for courses in that category of the General Education Core, as outlined in the Assessment Plan below. This role includes:
   
a) receiving and reviewing data on student performance and student survey results relevant to the category on an annual basis
   b) reviewing all course offered for general education credit in the category every three years to ensure the progress of students toward the Student Learning Goals
   c) preparing an annual report for the UCC with conclusions/proposals for improvement in the category.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

I. Purpose and Scope

Accrediting standards require institutions to “define expected educational results” (i.e. for general education, the UNCG Student Learning Goals), “develop guidelines and procedures to evaluate educational effectiveness, including the quality of student learning” (i.e. create an assessment plan which demonstrates how well students are reaching those goals), and “use the results of these evaluations to improve” the educational program. The focus on the development of assessment plans was a feature of the late eighties and early nineties; more recently, the emphasis of accrediting agencies is on “completing the loop”, or demonstrating that improvements are taking place based on assessment data, particularly data which demonstrates student learning.

UNCG affirms that the quality of student learning is the primary standard by which the effectiveness of an academic program, including the general education program, can be demonstrated. It also affirms that the general education program, like all university programs, should be continually reviewed and appropriate changes made in order to improve that effectiveness.

In addition to the central role of the UNCG General Education Core in addressing the Student Learning Goals, the major programs and other university programs build on the foundation laid in the General Education Core (or, for transfer students, in general education courses at other institutions). Therefore in addition to providing avenues for improvement of the General Education Core, this Assessment Program also includes attention to the broader scope of the Student Learning Goals. It will also provide data by which to recommend improvements in the role other UNCG programs (including major and non-academic programs) play in achieving the Student Learning Goals.

II. Components

An assessment plan linked to the Student Learning Goals requires mechanisms for review processes of several kinds. First, the General Education Core, both the category structure and the individual courses which make it up, needs periodic scrutiny and improvements (see III below). Secondly, each undergraduate major program also contributes to the full attainment of the Student Learning Goals, and recognition of this involvement should be reflected in the departmental assessment and improvement plan (see IV below). Finally, the full program, including the Student Learning Goals themselves, requires periodic review (see V, D below).
III. Assessment and Improvement of the General Education Core

Through the Assessment Committee and the GEC Committees, the UCC will utilize three avenues to gather information on student attainment of the Student Learning Goals: senior performance information supplied by academic departments about their majors (see A below), results of special studies of senior performance initiated to focus on one or two goals (see B below), and data from institutional surveys of seniors and alumni and other available measures (see C below).

A. Senior Performance Information from Academic Units

Each GEC Committee will review information and judgments supplied by designated academic departments concerning the performance of seniors in meeting the Student Learning Goals assigned to courses in the Committee’s designated category or categories. The GEC Committee reviews that information annually to determine if a need for improvement is indicated. Such improvement could be effected through changes in the guidelines for course review, through recommendations to departments offering the courses, or through recommendations to departments offering the courses, or through recommendations to the UCC for more extensive review. The UCC also receives all information supplied to the GEC Committees.

In keeping with the expectations of the institutional accrediting association, UNCG academic departments review student performance as a part of senior year assessment activities in each major, activities which include capstone courses, portfolio or performance requirements, professional examinations, and evaluation in required senior level courses. The senior performance component of the General Education Assessment Plan builds on these departmental assessments that are already taking place.

According to a system that is monitored by the Associate Provost, departments would agree on a volunteer basis to extend current mechanisms for assessing senior performance to evaluate their seniors’ attainment of one or more Student Learning Goals. Some departments already include some of these goals (for example, communication skills or cultural sensitivity) in the program goals or external reporting requirements on which their current assessment plans are based. Departments may agree to add additional goals to the major-related outcomes they evaluate and to provide information and professional judgments on their findings to the UCC and GEC Committees. The system would be designed to ensure coverage of all segments of the Student Learning Goals by appropriate departments.

Some departments already collect data on their majors that would be useful for this purpose. For example, a department that collects general GRE scores as a part of its assessment program might make the verbal and mathematical scores available to the appropriate area committees, or a department that conducts employer surveys or receives evaluations of student interns might make relevant information available. Many professional accrediting associations have requirements for student performance in general education skills that could serve as valid samples of all-university attainment. Students in teacher certification programs, nursing, and business programs, for example, are assessed in some general education areas for external agency requirements.

In order to use unsatisfactory performance rates to determine a need for UNCG course/area improvement or, conversely, a need for additional requirements for transfers, this report should differentiate between students who have completed the UNCG general education core and those who have transferred general education credits in the indicated category. (The UCC will provide data related to performance of transfers to staff and committees who develop articulation agreements and transfer equivalency policy.)

B. Senior Performance Assessment – Selected Goals

In addition to the senior performance information from academic departments, information on senior performance in a specific Student Learning Goal area will be sought through special campus-wide assessments. Focusing on two or three Student Learning Goals in a particular three-year period might be an appropriate timetable. Such an initiative would differ from a survey in that it would require students to demonstrate what they know and can do, not simply provide an opinion about their mastery.
The UCC will involve the GEC Committees in the selection and design process for such special assessments administered to a scientific sample of graduating seniors across majors. Baseline assessments are also a possible component of selected goals assessment. The appropriate GEC Committee would play a key role in the evaluation of the results. As with all these sources of information, senior assessment data gained would be used solely to improve the program.

C. Surveys and Other Available Data

The UCC and the Division Committees also utilize information available from other sources in their periodic reviews of UNCG’s effectiveness in meeting the Student Learning Goals. These sources include:


2. Employer evaluations of graduate performance in general education areas, including department specific surveys or any instrument developed to be used university-wide.

3. Any other relevant university-wide information that should become available.

IV. Assessment of Experiences in Majors/Other Programs/Units in Support of Student Learning Goals

Student outcomes assessment in the majors is also the review mechanism for components added to major program requirements in support of the Student Learning Goals, which are evaluated in terms of student performance along with the other goals of the major. Necessary improvements are put in place according to established procedures in those departments. Departments should use their annual reports to indicate their efforts and improvements in this area.

Likewise, activities in support of the Student learning Goals in Special Academic Activities (including Honors Program, International Programs, residential colleges) and in the Student Affairs, Enrollment Services and other non-academic areas, should pursue improvement of their contribution to the Student Learning Goals through their internal assessment and improvement plans.

In its annual review of assessment data submitted for review of the General Education Core (as listed above), the UCC will also pay attention to the role that experiences of the junior and senior play in the attainment of the Student learning Goals. They will assess progress and indicate avenues for improvement through their annual reports to the Faculty Senate and other means. In the first five year review of the program, the UCC will determine if a more centralized assessment plan or further reporting mechanisms are necessary for these activities in support of the Student Learning Goals.

V. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Role in Assessment

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee carries out the review role described in the Handbook for Faculty, “to oversee the adherence to the all-University requirements by the College and the various Schools and to initiate curricular reviews at least every five years.” This role is accomplished by:

A. Reviewing annual reports from each GEC Committee and making appropriate changes in the course listings for the categories of the general education core requirements.

B. Reviewing other relevant assessment data as indicated above at least annually and, if indicated, drafting recommendations or proposals as indicated to GEC Committees, the academic units, or appropriate university committees in such areas as:

- articulation agreements with community colleges
- transfer equivalency policy
- experiences toward the Student Learning Goals in the academic majors
- an identified need for additional assessment mechanisms
Appendix B:

GERTA Membership List

Walter Beale
College of Arts and Sciences
GEC Committees

Rob Cannon
College of Arts and Sciences
GEC Committees

Bill Crowther
College of Arts and Sciences

Steve Danford
College of Arts and Sciences
GEC Committees

Gavin Douglas
School of Music

William Alex Evans
Undergraduate Student

Elisabeth Hurd
School of Human Environmental Sciences
Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Eileen Kohlenberg
School of Nursing

Randy McMullen
College of Arts and Sciences
GEC Committees

Kathleen Rountree
Associate Provost (ex officio)

Larry Taube
Bryan School of Business and Economics
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee member

Denise Tucker
School of Health and Human Performance

John Willse
School of Education

Steve Zerwas
Director of Academic Assessment
Appendix C

Report of the Subcommittee on GEC Assessment

- The Challenge with General Education Assessment -

General Education has not been assessed- Reasons why

- Specificity of objectives
  - Objectives need to be broad enough to fit the realm of "general education", however, they need to be specific enough to give the student enough guidance to understand the objectives of general education.
  - There needs to be general/common agreement on what needs to be addressed in each of the GE categories. There needs to be enough commonality within each of the categories to allow assessment.

- Understanding of General Education
  - Many of the committee members and those teaching the general education courses have very little background in program assessment, time or inclination to develop the necessary expertise.

- Categories relationship to General Education
  - The relationship between general education program objectives and category course activities is unclear. There is very little follow up for Gen Ed. If a class receives approval one year, it is pretty much guaranteed to have that approval the next year. Mechanisms need to be developed that, after the course approval process, ensure that the courses continue to address general education program objectives as courses evolve through different instructors.

- Resources
  - There is limited potential to perform meaningful assessment of General education the current level of support. A budget for assessment activities does not exist, which limits assessment opportunities. Time for assessment activities is frequently crowded out of the equation by other pressing activities. There have been no positive or negative consequences for performing or not performing assessment of general education as a result assessment activities have floundered.

- Responsibility
  - It is unclear who is responsible for General Education Assessment. Although the General Education Categories have been given the responsibility to perform assessment activities in General Education, few mechanism are in place to ensure cooperation in assessment activities.
REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM

The subcommittee on GEC Curriculum was charged to discover the current situation regarding the present curriculum available to UNCG students. Information about the strengths and limitations of the GEC curriculum has been gleaned from the input of faculty, staff, and students at UNCG.

Current Strengths

1. UNCG delivers GEC curriculum as part of a smorgasbord of courses within various categories. This approach appears to utilize our faculty’s strengths (an extraordinary wide range of expertise and specialization within General Education).

2. Faculty from many academic areas regularly contribute new courses that expand the scope of the different GEC categories and markers.

3. The subcommittee feels that GEC has assisted in the evolution of UNCG’s curriculum. As this evolution continues, a future issue may be the constitution of the categories and markers; how should they evolve?

Current Issues

1. GEC curriculum has proliferated over the five years with few attempts to manage this growth. After being initially approved as GEC, courses have not been subsequently reviewed or examined to ensure that they continue to meet the category or marker goals, or are effective in meeting student learning objectives.

2. Students do not experience the same courses within categories, providing a wide variety of learning within categories and markers.

Recommendations

1. UNCG should continue to deliver GEC curriculum as part of a smorgasbord of courses within various categories. This approach appears to meet the needs of the vast majority of our students, and is acceptable to the vast majority of our faculty.

2. GERTA recommends to the UCC that some mechanism be implemented to evaluate approved courses on a regular basis. Every course should be reassessed once every three years. Does the course continue to meet the category or marker goals, and is the course effective in meeting student learning objectives.
Appendix E

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON GEC STRUCTURE

The subcommittee on GEC Structure was charged to discover the current situation regarding the policies and procedures through which the 10 GEC area committees operate.

Current Structure

When the General Education Curriculum (GEC) was developed, 10 committees were initiated. Their mission was to consider for approval courses in each of the 7 GEC curriculum areas and the 3 curriculum markers (Writing Intensive, Speaking Intensive, and Global). The membership of these committees was drawn from the general UNCG faculty. Some members had served on the Task Force which designed GEC and implemented the switch from AULER. Other members volunteered to serve.

By the decree of the Faculty Senate, all GEC committees operate under the supervision of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The UCC, in turn, reports to the Faculty Senate.

Strengths and Issues

Information about the strengths and limitations of the GEC committees' structure has been gleaned from the input of faculty, staff, and students at UNCG.

It should be noted that the chairs and members of the GEC committees have worked valiantly at the singular goal they were given when the committees were founded: GEC course approval. Since GEC was implemented, they have studied hundreds of courses. They have made it possible for GEC to exist and have done so without clerical support or faculty direction.

That having been said, there are a number of challenges regarding the ways in which these committees operate which have been identified. They are as follows.

1. Unlike most other universities, there is no group of faculty whose primary charge it is to act as experts on general education at UNCG. There is no faculty group taking a proactive, energized role around general education. We have no one whose mission is to attend national conferences on general education or to consult with peers interested in advances in general education. Thus, we have no one to bring new knowledge about general education to UNCG.
2. It has proved impossible for the 10 committees consisting of over 80 faculty members, or even all their chairs, to meet together to discuss GEC issues. Therefore, there is little sharing of ideas or discussion among these subject-oriented groups. This may lead to stagnation in GEC and stifling of curricular innovation, especially interdisciplinary courses.

3. The GEC committee structure limits discussion of general education to the one curricular area for which that committee is responsible. There is no opportunity for faculty from different disciplines to exchange ideas as to course development or approval.

4. The structure of the GEC committees is currently that of free standing entities which do not share "best practices" developed by individual committees.

5. Despite the mandate passed by the Faculty Senate that GEC courses be reviewed every 3 years, there is no group of faculty charged with doing so. Neither is the responsibility for the assessment of GEC clearly designated to any specific faculty group. The GEC committees do not have the resources or training to take on that huge task.

6. The GEC committee structure, being subject-oriented, is not aligned with the goals of GEC as outlined in the "Habits of Mind". This may mean that no one is ensuring that the Habits of Mind are included in our students' curriculum and may impede assessment of student learning overall.

7. The multiple committee structure may be an impediment to the Development of innovative courses. The GEC course approval process is "cumbersome", especially if faculty are seeking multiple designations for a course (for example, a Historical Perspectives designation, as well as Writing Intensive and Global markers). Each committee may have different standards and requirements to which a course must conform to earn approval.

8. No official bylaws and procedural manual were ever developed by the UCC for the GEC committees. This has led to a chaotic situation which has engendered a number of policy and procedural problems.

   a. A membership of 80 individuals on 10 committees causes a constantly changing list of membership. Keeping the UCC or the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education updated on current members is a nearly impossible goal. Therefore, communication between the UCC and the GEC committees is problematic.
b. There is no system of membership. Chairs and members are supposed to be appointed for 3 year terms, but both the members and chairs lose track of their terms or expiration dates. Chairs and members appoint themselves. In other words, when a replacement is needed on a committee, the chair or member simply recruits another faculty member to take her/his place. Chairs are not elected by their members.

c. No training is provided for new chairs or members as to their duties or the curricular standards for GEC.

d. No resources are available to help with the staffing of the 10 committees.

e. There is no appeals process for courses rejected by the GEC committees nor is the UCC usually aware of such rejected courses.

f. There is no mechanism for granting provisional approval for experimental courses which faculty wish to have a GEC designation.

g. There is no continuous communication between the UCC and the GEC committees, therefore, no continuity exists on academic standards and procedures.

Recommendations

The GEC subcommittee on Structure was charged only with studying the current situation of the 10 GEC committees. We would like to offer some suggestions, however, as to ways which the UCC might consider dealing with the issues on structure which we uncovered.

There can be no doubt that a primary recommendation must be to create bylaws and a procedural manual for any committee responsible for the oversight of general education.

We further recommend that a web page for the General Education Curriculum and its overseeing body be created. Such a web page would allow not only for dissemination of information but also could contain training materials for GEC members or faculty who teach GEC courses.

Beyond that recommendation, we offer either of these options as to the future structure of faculty oversight of the General Education Curriculum.

Option 1. One General Education Oversight Committee, made up of approximately 10 faculty from diverse disciplines, could be created. It would be
charged with upholding and developing the requirements, management, and assessment of the general education curriculum at UNCG. It would report to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

These faculty would be given the resources to attend national conferences on general education and to obtain publications, printed and on-line, on trends and innovative ideas on general education, thus ensuring that UNCG students can benefit from the best and most current philosophies available.

Option 2. Together with the Oversight Committee in Option 1, a body of consultants to assist the Committee could be added. These consultants would be faculty from diverse disciplines and might well embrace current GEC chairs and members. These consultants would be called upon by the Oversight Committee to provide expertise on curriculum in their particular area, serving as needed.
Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Tue Dec 06 2005 15:33
Author: Lepri, John J. <jilepri@uncg.edu>
Subject: Different Balance of General Education?

12 hrs of humanities and arts
6 hours of reasoning and discourse
6 hours of social sciences

vs.

only 3 hours of math and 6 or 7 hours of science?

Reply

Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Sun Dec 11 2005 22:33
Author: Taube, Larry R. <larry_taube@uncg.edu>
Subject: Interdisciplinary GEC courses?

GEC committees have been successful at populating the various categories with sufficient number of courses. However, this success seems to be only "functional" in nature, and little success with interdisciplinary courses/categories; an individual GEC committee rarely evaluates a course proposal that will request additional category credit. Students want one course with multiple category credit, and very few (if any?) courses deliver that need.

Part of the reason for this shortcoming may be the lack of a mechanism to offer a provisional course. Should there be a process by which a cross-functional course is delivered on a trial basis?

Reply

Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Tue Dec 13 2005 10:23
Author: Bucknall, Nancy Gray <Nancy_Bucknall@uncg.edu>
Subject: Re: Different Balance of General Education?

Another way to change the mix would be to group Science & Math into 1 category and have students complete 4 of their choice, much as they have choice in the additional Humanities & Fine Arts Grouping.

Reply

Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Tue Dec 13 2005 10:26
Author: Bucknall, Nancy Gray <Nancy_Bucknall@uncg.edu>
Subject: Re: Interdisciplinary GEC courses?
I agree that inter-disciplinary choices would be a valuable addition to the GEC curriculum, but trying to meet two very different sets of learning goals with one class would be very difficult for both instructors and students.

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**Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review**

**Date:** Tue Dec 13 2005 11:12  
**Author:** Taube, Larry R. <larry_taube@uncg.edu>  
**Subject:** More Science in GEC

In light of recent public debate regarding "intelligent design," it seems to me that the GEC should require more science. Take THAT from an artist!

Posted for Mark Gottsegen by Larry Taube

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**Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review**

**Date:** Tue Dec 13 2005 11:19  
**Author:** Yarbrough, Stephen R. <sryarbro@uncg.edu>  
**Subject:** Let's scrap this program

Are the goals of the General Education Program (as stated on pages 50-51 of the UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin) appropriate and complete?

The answer to this question is that it's the wrong question. I see two issues here:

1) Can we tell whether we are reaching these goals or not?

2) Are we going about reaching these goals in the right way?

The answer to the first question is "yes," "maybe," and "no." Yes, we can, to some degree, assess the "Proficiencies" section of the Student Learning goals. Such skills can be, if not objectively, at least intersubjectively evaluated. Maybe we can assess some of the bullet points under "Knowledge and Understanding," but several are simply unknown by anyone and should be listed as "issues students may want to explore" rather than "learning goals." No, we cannot assess anything in the "Habits of Mind and Attributes of Character" section—period.

As for the second question, I think we are going about this in entirely the wrong way. The fill-in-the-blanks approach to curriculum the GEC requirements represent, with its "core categories" and "markers," is the worst form of Scholasticism imaginable. It encourages students to think of education as like some shopping game: OK kiddies, you're allowed to buy X number of groceries in Y amount of time, but you must buy no less than 20 percent in aisle two, 20 percent in aisle three, twenty percent in aisle four, and you must choose a favorite aisle and buy at least 30 percent of your groceries on that aisle. Just make sure that, of these choices, 10 percent have "protein" markers, 10 percent have "carbohydrate" markers, and 10 percent have "fat" markers. The rest is your choice.

We must rethink this program entirely. My students think it's a joke; most of my colleagues think it's a joke; I know it's a joke. A truly bad joke.
I am neither an historian nor philosopher, but, I seem to recall from those courses that there is a centuries-long discussion related to the body-mind dichotomy. In my 18 years at UNCG, the focus of GEC/AULER (or whatever nom du jour) has certainly been on the mind. Perhaps we need to think more broadly and revisit the importance of putting body & mind together.

I won't even bring up our astonishing incidence of obesity & inactivity (and, UNCG's designation as one of the 'fattest colleges/universities'). I won't bring up the growing body of research that demonstrates improved cognitive function following exercise/activity. Finally, I won't mention the enormous cost of health care in the country, much of which is related to our inactivity/obesity. I'm sure there is no relationship between this and our health care bennies. . .

I simply suggest that we examine whether the body benefits the mind in a sufficiently substantial way as to warrant inclusion as a "General Ed" area. . .

Thomas Jefferson suggested that some time each day should be set aside for training the body. Some of the greatest scholars and influential people of our time have paid tribute to the importance of physical activity. It should bother all of us to know that we, as faculty, could perpetuate the belief that training our body is less important than training our mind. Therefore, I want to reiterate that enforcing the importance of a healthy lifestyle should be paramount in all our minds. Afterall, the future of our healthcare system depends on it. I also want to add that I am not sure that the best way to do this is by adding "just another requirement" to the schedule of our students. However, I believe that restructuring the current system to reflect a more equal balance between the groupings in GEC [suggested by others on this discussion board], would allow students the freedom to take classes that focused on healthy lifestyle choices and still meet the goals of GEC.
shouldn't the student be able to construct a grammatically-correct coherent paper? A paper with complete sentences, paragraphs, and correct spelling? Is my expectation unrealistic? Some would say all faculty have a responsibility to teach writing skills, but our faculty is educated to be nurses - and we can teach nursing - but we may not be the best-prepared group to be teaching basic writing skills.

2. I would say that the GEC requirements are the faculty's learning goals, and not the students, unfortunately.

3. See the end of paragraph 1. I do not know what students are achieving with the current GEC requirements. We need to develop a more measurable set of hoped-for outcomes.

4. Course approval process: it seems cumbersome to me, and often does not allow for courses in a major to be categorized as meeting any GEC requirements (e.g., GL or GN). I'm speaking from the nursing point of view, and I don't think we want to undertake teaching math or fine arts in nursing, but we tried several times to have courses designated as GL, and could never achieve that.

In general, the system is cumbersome to students. Trying to explain it to freshmen is very difficult. Trying to explain it to transfer students is difficult. I would recommend trying to redefine the goals of the Gen Ed program, and doing away with the "marker" concept, which confuses everyone.

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Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Thu Dec 15 2005 10:09
Author: Gerhart, Robert R. <rrgerhar@uncg.edu>
Subject: Learning Goals

The Learning Goals on page 50 were crafted by a thoughtful committee (I assume a committee) and express lofty ideals for 36 or 37 semester hours of course work. Mission Statements and Goals usually seem vacuous even though they are capably written and encapsulate the most important purposes of the institution.

These goals don't really drive the institution but are expected to be the yardstick for measuring achievement. Without energetic faculty who like to teach, stated goals have little value. However, the goals do help shape the GEC requirements. Or is it the other way around? Does our range of courses require our Knowledge and Understanding bullets? The two go hand-in-hand.

Perhaps the marker system might be streamlined, although the GEC setup seems rather easy to follow; and it spreads requirements across the campus—a little something for everyone. Most students still have room for electives—quite a few electives in some cases.

However, I did not like the SI requirement (within the department) appearing several years ago out of the blue. In my department, too many art majors are now chasing too few SI offerings. I could be more accommodating, but that's the one thing I'd like to get rid of.

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Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Thu Dec 15 2005 19:51
Author: Taube, Larry R. <larry_taube@uncg.edu>
Subject: From Mark Gottsegen: Flexibility is needed within GEC

All students are REQUIRED to take 37 hours OUTSIDE their major. LIST the AREAS as they are now, and explain that the student's choices must be spread as evenly as possible among the areas. Leave it up to the students and their advisors, with this warning: If a pre-graduation audit by the Registrar's office finds that the student has not followed the foregoing rules, they cannot graduate. That will motivate both the students AND the faculty advisors.
Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Mon Dec 19 2005 14:47
Author: Stoudemire, Nancy M. <nmstoude@uncg.edu>
Subject: Writing and more on the mind-body connection

I wholeheartedly feel that students should learn how to write grammatically correct sentences somewhere in the GEC courses. I have been in several different meetings where I was shocked to hear that "we don't teach writing...that is up to the disciplines". While it's true that the people in GEC may not know the intricacies of the writing styles used in each discipline, it is impossible for those of us in the disciplines to teach that when the students don't have the basics of sentence structure. If we don't teach it in GEC, then students should have the opportunity to have a remedial writing class.

Second topic: why don't we require some class on general health? There are multiple classes that could fulfill this basic knowledge gap for our students. While we as faculty know that exercise, nutrition, and mental health are important, do we convey this to our students? Let's practice what we preach! There are any number of classes in public health, exercise science, and nutrition (and probably others) that would meet this basic need. We might even think about adding an activity requirement to the GEC courses.

Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Tue Dec 20 2005 14:05
Author: Leyden, Dennis P. <leyden@uncg.edu>
Subject: What are the appropriate questions?

I think these are the appropriate questions to ask, and I look forward to the discussion. I might simply add, in that regard, that a related question is what do students come with when they enter UNCG? Universities sometimes assume that students come as tabula rasa and as a result don't build on (or correct problems with) pre-existing skills and knowledge.

Regarding those questions, the discussion could be quite broad, but my guess is that while there might be some tweaking of the existing goals, the real problems are with delivery, knowing what has been acheived, and oversight.

Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review
Date: Fri Jan 06 2006 11:13
Author: Gold, Laurie Wideman <L_widema@uncg.edu>
Subject: Re: Comments from Dr. Virginia Karb, posted by Larry Taube

The writing issue is pervasive. I have frequently wondered who should be responsible for teaching basic writing skills. It is impossible to teach technical writing to a student when they can't tell whether or not their sentence has a noun and a verb, let alone placing adjectives and adverbs properly. As an instructor, it is impossible to
spend adequate time giving feedback about content, when you spend the entire time correcting basic writing errors. Equally frustrating is discerning whether or not a student actually grasps a concept, or do they just write so poorly that they can't express the concept! I have to admit that I am frustrated by the situation, no one wants to take responsibility for teaching basic writing skills and it is clear that many of our students do not enter the university with these skills. As expressed by others, I feel comfortable teaching technical writing to students, but I don't consider myself a scholar in the area of teaching the fundamentals of writing. I believe the writing issue needs to be central in the discussion and decisions that are made about GEC.

---

Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review  
Date: Fri Jan 13 2006 12:41  
Author: Taube, Larry R. <larry_taube@uncg.edu>  
Subject: Scaling back GEC - Lisa Levenstein

Here are my two cents on GEC in general:

In advising students I have found that GEC significantly impedes with their ability to make the most of their education and to learn to value the pursuit of knowledge. Education is reduced to checking off boxes instead of pursuing topics that they are interested in. Many of them try to find the "easiest" class in a range of categories because they are not interested in the subject matter while they forgo pursuing much more challenging electives in subjects that they truly love. I believe this is a tragedy. We are not teaching them about a liberal arts education in any way. Most of them rarely experience the joys of education and I think GEC is largely responsible. Consequently, I think that we need to scale back GEC considerably. There should be far fewer requirements and many more electives. Good advising can help the students to pursue topics that excite and challenge them.

Lisa Levenstein

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Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review  
Date: Sun Jan 15 2006 15:23  
Author: Cuny, Kimberly Marie <kmcuny@uncg.edu>  
Subject: Re: Interdisciplinary GEC courses?

While it is a task to create a course with many markers I find that my FMS class with three GEC markers is manageable. When it had four markers it was too much for the freshman but not too much for me. Offered as a three or four hundred level course with the four markers would work, I believe. Here are the markers:

FMS 130 WI, SL, & Fine Arts

FMS 132 WI, SL, Global NonWestern, & Fine arts

If one is creating a new course from the ground up working in many markers can be very exciting. I think the bigger challenge is getting an existing course to have many markers... that is where the challenge gets harder in my opinion.

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Forum: Parameters of the General Education Review  
Date: Sun Jan 15 2006 15:40
Author: Cuny, Kimberly Marie <kmcuny@uncg.edu>
Subject: Re: Learning Goals

<However, I did not like the SI requirement (within the department) appearing several years ago out of the blue.>

Just FYI here, no commentary

The faculty at UNCG voted unanimously to accept the SI requirement under a plan that would give the departments the freedom to identify the specific oral communication competencies their majors would need to master before graduation. As a result, SI course work (the competencies) has been added by all department to service all majors to the point that each students gets a seat in one SI course in the major.
Summary of Faculty Forum Content Analysis (Draft from Incomplete DATA and ANALYSIS)

Organization

There is no simple list of non-vague objectives because of how many specializations there has to be generality. The objectives have to be loose. There are different standards in different fields. How do you assess it? We have a Capstone course.

You said you thought that some of these committees can be eliminated. Can you...

Maybe the outcome should be assessed. Syllabi have nothing to do with student learning. 3 years too short.

Connections between majors & Gen Ed stronger discipline togetherness.

The idea that someone knows facts above knowledge is far valued because it is part of the process of

We know what grades are not any assessment info. Gen Ed foundation, platform, scaffold or the major Lack of consensus

Transfer students have issues taking 300 level courses then having to take 100 or 200 level courses.

Some majors stipulate which classes need to be taken...? protect Gen Ed from that. It's hard to move one major to another. Choice for student flexibility for student. The process isn't same for all committees.

There are two parts one is having the knowledge and the other is having the skill

It seems like what we're talking about the habits of mind could be done in (different category) and not have to deal with them

There is such a variety of courses for students to choose from.

So many committees & so many goals. Unreasonable expectations –no clout, done within context of 5-year plan. It was piloted but never done in total. Done to appease SACS

Practical structure of Gen Ed some require early, some late. Student's perception of once done, it's done. When should we ask students to do it? There isn't even a standard of when. Students don't look at goals, they look at classes.

Question

...? meaning more reasoning ??

What exactly is...?

What is GEC doing that AUER did better? And vice versa?

Is it possible that some courses have lost sight of why they're there?

How has the structure affected you as faculty or your students?

What is the graduation rate?

How are other schools doing this?

We used to have one didn't we?

How do you achieve that?

what do you teach them?

Consistency in writing abilities
Don’t most students take it anyway?
Should we talk about AUER vs. GEC

Sunset Proposal

We’ve thought about it. When courses change faculty, they change. But as a student or advisor, it would be ridiculous if one year it had it and one year it didn’t.

There is a way to put a course aside and not print it. There is no way UCC can just delete them now, however.

Easy we have GEC area committees, the committee chair sends out an e-mail to the faculty member or department head saying, You have these GEC courses. We want to see a syllabus for a particular course that meets a particular requirement and then the GEC area committee can evaluate it. If they don’t thinks it’s appropriate, they can come back and say, Your syllabus indicates that you’re not meeting the expectation of GEC. You have one or two semesters to fix that and resubmit and if it doesn’t meet our expectations, we will decertify your course as a GEC course.

What sort of mechanism should we encourage to have these courses...?? after so many years.

There are over 800 Writing Intensive courses. It would be ridiculous to look those over every year. You have to be approved to teach. Lots have blanket approval.

If goals haven’t been changed, it seems inconceivable that courses that based on past won’t ever not pass.

Maybe the outcome should be assessed. Syllabi have nothing to do with student learning. 3 years too short.

Lots of courses dropped out I’ll tell you one set of courses that were not grandfathered in were the WI courses that I had to go ahead and resubmit and put in a brand new proposal. It was a period where it was recently submitted.

The need for GEC courses to be re-reviewed called for review of courses every third year. Do you think about that?

There are lots of courses that are on the list that have never been taught. There are some schools that make you defend it. You can’t reuse a number so they keep it and just change the name.

Responsibility

Dr. Roumteed speaking for committee chairs in addition of assessment makes it hard for them. The goals don’t match the committees. Not enough time, staff, expertise, money.

SAILS we used once. There are standardized tests, but there are resources as the issue.

Brown doesn’t have Gen Ed. They make students choose their classes.

Practical structure of Gen Ed some require early, some late. Student’s perception of once done, it’s done. When should we ask students to do it?

There isn’t even a standard of when. Students don’t look at goals, they look at classes.

High-achieving students have achieved these goals. Have the lower achieving students? How does one elevate students to a higher level?

Making a subcommittee from 2 committee members one approval for both.
Transfer students have different approvals than native students. Big issue with Gen Ed & Study Abroad. There are 2 different standards.

Do something small enough to satisfy SACS. Should be a statement of how the general goals were covered. Need an incentive.

My students just take the classes they have to; they don't read the catalog. When do they become aware of student learning goals?

**Assessment Responsibility**

GRE subject test, writing exams, GRE writing exam.

Who is responsible for assessment of Gen Ed? GEC committees firmly set there. Is there evidence that students are achieving Gen Ed? Not aware of evidence about student learning Gen Ed. We graduate students w/o writing goals being achieved. Writing Intensive courses are not equal. What are they expected to learn? Concerned about writing skills. Yes, there is evidence — higher level courses — assessment of product in certain areas. First effort at assessment but there is some. There are writing workshops every year. Faculty are not required to attend. Expectations of faculty carrying out agreements. Some standards. When left to departments as to what is writing intensive, there are no standards.

In NY very into assessment. Says students must expect to be tested throughout. There was still faculty resistance.

Convincing students that it’s important students won’t volunteer.

What did they get at the end of that course? We don’t know!

What should students be required to do when they graduate, no matter what their major is? We have to have Gen Ed because they don’t get it in high school.

O credit thing as assessment to graduate

**Measurable Objectives**

You want to turn knowledge and understanding into objectives?

It seems to me that these are not goals. They are like missions. They are not measurable. They wouldn’t meet any standards for objectives. What kind of objectives are measurable? They were vague on purpose. They thought in the future they would become specific, avoiding arguments, etc.

Writing Intensive courses were created to allow disciplines to have control over what they consider good writing. Universally objectives can’t happen in a university this big.

We need clear, measurable objectives to have everyone implement it the same.

Goals have not been expressed in any measurable way.

There needs to be assessment. It will make a difference if we switch some of these goals to objectives, but we need to have better assessment in the classes that have the objectives.

It’s very much political compromise territoriality who’s going to gain, who’s going to lose? Requiring foreign language was a huge issue. Having better goals from the assessment point of view.

There is no simple list of non-vague objectives because of how many specializations there has to be generality. The objectives have to be loose. There are different standards in different fields. How do you assess it? We have a Capstone course.
Assessment Needed

I think if we have a better assessment when they come in we will have a better idea of where we're starting. Yeah, it'll be a number.

How can we assess all these different ideas from what we are doing in the class, how can we show SACS what we are doing?

There needs to be assessment. It will make a difference if we switch some of these goals to objectives, but we need to have better assessment in the classes that have the objectives.

It will be another measure to help us figure out where we're starting.

What do numbers mean?

Consistency

Too much consistency will interfere.
Gen Ed 100 & 200 level not above 200. We've been picking on Writing Intensive courses, but there are other markers. We have to look at those.

There is consistency, writing committee has standards.

The structure is cumbersome. It takes a long time to get a course approved. It stifles interdisciplinary integration. There is a fear that the standards won't be the same. Statistics Appreciation

If these are general there should be a variety of people assessing them, not departmentalized. No general consensus.

Clarification

60%

Yeah we used to have it.

We serve some not all. We would have to sit down and figure it out. I don't really want to limit this to just an ESS departmental gain, there can be other departments as well. It's important for everyone.

Of course.

Evidence

You don't have hard facts.

We do. Really good students get into grad school and 2.1 grads are without jobs. Give them a test, see what they know.

Most of the freshman in here don't do that well, but by the time the graduate, they are doing better.

High School Preparation

We should find out, and include that so we don't have to repeat so much

Preparedness of high school seniors - Many high schools have these same proficiencies. I like repetition, it's necessary, but what I'm saying is if they are starting at these level in high school, why can't we start a little higher. I would like to know where the high schools are starting off, aren't they getting something in high school? And if they are, we should hold them responsible for what they are getting in high school and add on top of that.

Well if the average SAT score of students entering is 1300 we wouldn't have a problem either, but it isn't
Increase Proficiencies

More proficiencies?
General ed and high school are very different
We need to build on the high schools, not just repeat them. (in general Ed).

Criteria

As freshmen and sophomores have university parts that need to be addressed.
Is there any standard?
Writing & speaking have qualifiers about how well they need to be done.
Others don't.

Definition needed

Sensitivity to social and cultural differences. Obviously they need to know
about societies, how people interact. How could that be done? Through history
courses, psychology courses, sociology courses, etc. Sensitivity and
attentiveness to the ethical dimensions of any problem or experience. Have
courses on the issue of ethics, philosophy, and values. What it does is it opens
you up to more flexibility in the specific courses. Rather than thinking you've
got to have a history course, a math course. What you have to have is a
sense of history, a sense of the quantitative and that could be achieved in a
variety of ways
What we don't have is the flexibility for students to choose. There are some
that argue that having students choose the subject matter even if it is directed,
is a benefit in itself because it makes them more invested in the material. Rather
than simply taking a certain history course they are more likely to have chosen
topics This is all dreaming. This hour is about defining the ideal and then
figuring in the realities of the world rather than worry about the constraints first.

Implementation

That's right, but implementation is a problem. There is no policing of it.
GEC is charged with assessment but it's been forgotten.

Simplify

GEC classes are more professional in nature than AULER? It's frustrating. What
is seen as open doors are really closed doors. Numbers change. How many
courses have prerequisites?
What we don't have is the flexibility for students to choose. There are some
that argue that having students choose the subject matter even if it is directed,
is a benefit in itself because it makes them more invested in the material. Rather
than simply taking a certain history course they are more likely to have chosen
topics This is all dreaming. This hour is about defining the ideal and then
figuring in the realities of the world rather than worry about the constraints first.

Add fitness and health

The habits of mind something other than that I don't have the expertise, but it
seems that since I'm here as a spokesperson for the other faculty in the. Most
of us heard about how great UNCG is... there are a couple of points I want to
make from the memo... looking at fitness/health is very important as is the health
of our nation. A lot of our sister campuses have a general ed requirement of
health. I feel it is very important, and I want us to strongly consider some type of
Expectation

Maybe goals of Gen Ed are too high. What do we expect of students after one course of Fine Arts?

Greater Expectations

Dr. Roundtree - there is a document that has many points for having habits of mind, and about teamwork and leadership. It talks about students showing us what they can do as opposed to information they have to retrieve out of their minds, he has asked if we have achieved this. It is available on the website. The ways in which some schools have addressed this issue is each student must complete one of the team approaches or any one of the other ways of demonstrating what they can do as leaders and human, more than just knowledge.

 Lack Evidence

What do students take away from it? I don't see anything.

I don't see evidence of courses not working. Student's work isn't evidence.

Politics

It's very much political compromise territoriality who's going to gain, who's going to lose? Requiring foreign language was a huge issue. Having better goals from the assessment point of view.

Proposal

If you look at habits of mind except for issues of interaction of science and mathematics you could take the awareness of science and quantitative reasoning. Take proficiencies and all the understanding have essentially all the fundamental goals then take proficiencies, knowledge, and understanding. No longer primary objectives but instrumental objectives in achieving the habits of mind... and they can be played around with from time to time as we need to achieve the fundamental objectives. But the fundamental ones are these habits of mind. It simplifies it to a core set of objectives that we want our students to have and then everything else is a little more subject to change depending on whether we're achieving them or not. Not supposed to achieve the fundamental objectives.

Retention

Most of them don't graduate

Service Learning

Service learning does activities and trips internship in service learning might be something to consider as well.

Speaking Criteria

A specific example would be speaking coherently and clearly, in high school if they are already using the word like 10 times, in college they would only use it 5 times. Still repetition, but better.
Appendix H

DATED: January 11, 2006

Format: Each Section below will serve as the discussion point for one 45-minute forum. Sections 1 and 2 will be discussed in back-to-back sessions (please note that Section 2 will go first on January 23). Sections 3 and 4 will be discussed on January 24 in a similar format. Each forum will begin with a general question to attendees, and end with a summarizing question to attendees. Those questions have not yet been added to this draft. The Forums will take place in the Maple Room of EUC.

I. GEC CURRICULUM: January 23 from 3PM to 4PM, facilitated by Larry Taube.

| Summarized Findings of the Taskforce to Date | "Do students have the opportunity to achieve their learning goals through current curricular offerings?"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[List of findings here]</td>
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</table>

- UNCG delivers GEC curriculum as part of a smorgasbord of courses within various categories.
- This approach appears to utilize our faculty’s strengths of an extraordinary wide range of expertise and specialization within General Education.
- Students do not experience the same courses within categories, providing a wide variety of learning within categories and markers.
- GEC curriculum has proliferated over the five years with few attempts to manage this growth.
- After being initially approved as GEC, courses have not been subsequently reviewed or examined to ensure that they continue to meet the category or marker goals, or are effective in meeting student learning objectives.
- One of the goals of GEC was to assist the evolution of our curriculum. Assuming this is true, the General Education Core Categories/Markers should possibly evolve also.
- Evidence (from some Advisors, Faculty and Students) seem to indicate that GEC is too complex in terms of variety of categories, inconsistency within sections of a particular course, and other issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Should General Education at UNCG continue on our present course, or should we modify our approach?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #2</td>
<td>Is the complexity of GEC at an appropriate level? If not, what aspects should we focus on?</td>
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</table>
II. GOALS OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: January 23 from 4PM to 5PM, facilitated by Walter Beale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summarized Findings of the Taskforce to Date</th>
<th>“Are the goals of the General Education Program (as stated on pages 50 – 51 of the UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin) appropriate and complete?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Goals include Proficiencies, Knowledge and Understanding, Habits of Mind and Attributes of Character, and are specified in the Undergraduate Bulletin on page 50.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Goals are written in a broad style that makes measurement of student achievement difficult.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The relationship between the General Education Core Categories/Markers (and the 10 GEC Core Committees) is unclear in some cases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There has been no modification or formal review of the goals since their adoption five years ago.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The findings of the AASCU “Greater Expectations” report may indicate the need for additional student competencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We do not adequately articulate the reasons/motivations to either faculty or students or the public.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Are the goals of the General Education Program, as stated in the Undergraduate Bulletin, complete, pertinent, and timely?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #2</td>
<td>Should the GEC Taskforce suggest the addition, deletion, or modification of any of the GEC goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #3</td>
<td>Should we investigate new ways to articulate the value of GEC to students and (new) faculty?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. DEMONSTRATING ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING IN GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS:  
January 24 from 3PM to 4PM, facilitated by Stephen Zerwas.

| Summarized Findings of the Taskforce to Date | General Education has not been regularly or reliably assessed due to several reasons:  
  - Lack of specificity of objectives in Proficiencies, Knowledge and Understanding, and Habits of Mind and Attributes of Character make measurement difficult or impossible in some goals.  
  - Time and resources for assessment activities are limited.  
  - The GEC governance document assigns assessment to the 10 GEC Core Committees; however the chairs of those committees lack the expertise and the time to carry out this charge. |

| Question #1 | What should be assessed in General Education? |
| Question #2 | What should be done to ensure that General Education is assessed? |
IV. GENERAL EDUCATION OVERSIGHT AND STRUCTURE: January 24 from 4PM to 5PM, facilitated by Elisabeth Hurd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summarized Findings of the Taskforce to Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The GEC committee structure is not aligned with the Goals of General Education, as outlined in the Bulletin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The GEC committee structure limits discussion of general education to the one curriculum area for which that committee is responsible. There is no opportunity for faculty from different disciplines to discuss the whole of the general education curriculum or to promote interdisciplinary dialogue among faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The development of courses may be hindered by requiring them, if they seek multiple designations, to conform to the ideas of separate GEC committees (for ex., Historical Perspectives, Writing Intensive, and Global).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There are no official By-Laws for General Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>- no appeals process for rejected courses</td>
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<td>- no system of membership for GEC committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No system exists for educating new GEC members.</td>
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<td>• No mechanism exists for provisional approval within GEC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There is no consistency between GEC committees and UCC regarding course approval</td>
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<td>- WI and SI do not report to UCC.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Who should be responsible for the activities (assessment, course approval, etc.) of GEC?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #2</td>
<td>How should we support the development of GEC courses, both in general and in multidisciplinary courses.</td>
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</table>
GEC Review Taskforce, October 30, 2005
Advising Council Members present: Nancy Bucknall, Dianna Carter, Karen Gilbert, & Robert Ross

The Advising Council feels strongly that the Markers required in the General Educational Curriculum have had unintended effects on the way students choose to meet their requirements. In particular:

GL/GN markers
- Restrict the practical choices in the GLT, GFA, GPR, & GHP categories, especially for professional school majors. For example, a Nursing major who is serious about completing her degree in 4 years with as close as possible to the stated 122 credit hour minimum cannot practically choose Introduction to Literature, ENG 104, because it will not satisfy her Global requirement. This restricts not only the total number of courses from which the student can choose, but also restricts the days/times which the student can choose a general education requirement to fit with her major requirements.
- Have caused courses that focus on American culture to take serious enrollment hits as students move toward courses that meet a category requirement and carry a marker
  - WCV 101 > HIS 211
  - DCE 200 > THE 100
- Markers can cause delays for undecided majors. A student who decides during his third semester to major in Exercise & Sport Science might have already met most of the GEC category requirements but not have met many of the GL/GN requirements. Since none of his major requirements carry GL or GN markers, the student will have to take additional courses to meet this requirement. It’s difficult for advisors to help Undecided students address GL/GN markers early on because neither knows whether the student’s eventual major will have adequate GL/GN markers.
- It is difficult to explain to students why some courses DON’T carry a GL or GN marker. For example, ART 100 and ART 101, which include works of art from across Europe are do not carry the GL marker. But ART 103 (which is taught less frequently and usually with a smaller enrollment) does carry a GN marker. The inconsistency of the Markers strikes the students as difficult to understand at best and unfair at worst.

WI/SI markers
- Finding seats can be difficult, especially for new Transfer students who register after the Continuing students.
- Shifting assignments is somewhat confusing to students. That is, if PCS 100 is WI in the Fall, why isn’t it WI in the following Spring? It is very difficult for students to plan when they will meet this requirement (more difficult for the GEC+ CAR students than the GEC students.)
- Students who transfer in ENG 102 or who have AP credit for ENG 102 have to take additional course work to earn the SI marker.
- Very hard to explain to students that ENG 101 isn’t WI. It would be easier to require 3 WI courses and put WI marker on ENG 101 (and all transfer versions of the course) than to explain to students that their composition class isn’t WI.
GNS
- Transfer students often have two sciences from the same department and thus have to take an additional course.
- Advanced courses are ruled out as GEC courses for all but College majors (BIO 112, GEO 311, CHE 114 etc)

From the comments and questions fielded during the meeting, it seemed to the Council that some members of the Task Force considered delay in graduation to be our central concern. While no one on the Advising Council wants to see students having to stay additional semesters or attending summer school to finish their General Education Requirements, we were not trying to argue that this is the case. Our real concern is the complicated nature of the Marker system and the restrictions on curricular choice the Marker system imposes on many Professional School students. If the intention on the Marker system was to increase flexibility in students' choices and to reduce the total number of credit hours required by the General Education Curriculum, we as an Advising Council do not feel that the system is currently effectively meeting these goals.
Summary of GEC Committee Chair Meetings 9/16/05 and 9/15/05

The GEC Chairs Met on 9/6/05 and 9/15/05 to discuss the status of assessment of General education curriculum. This documents the product of those meetings.

On 9/6/05 Stephen Zerwas, Director of Academic Assessment, presented an overview of the "The "General Education Oversight Plan" which was part of the proposal for the General Education Program (Revised 12/03/99) that was distributed to the faculty prior to its formal adoption. This document was part of the 'charge' to the newly minted GEC committees. Discussion of the General Education Oversight Plan resulted in consensus, that although the plan existed it had never been implemented.

Further discussion focused on identifying the reasons for the lack of implementation of General Education Oversight Plan. The following explanations were proposed and recorded and subsequently confirmed and revised at the 9/15/05 meeting.

Explanations for the lack of implementation of the General Education Oversight Plan

1) It appears that the distribution of the General Education Oversight Plan was limited or inconsistent and that not all GEC chairs were aware of its existence or of their responsibilities as outlined by the document. This in part contributed to lack of implementation. Despite the lack of awareness of the specifics of this plan, several GEC committees have attempted to implement assessments in their areas.

2) There was a perception that there is limited conceptual and logical rationale for some of the General Education categories and markers. It was suggested that it was never the intention for General Education categories and markers to be aligned around an internally consistent set of objectives, but rather the purpose of the General Education program was to ensure that students were exposed to some content area within the marker to ensure breadth of experience. Without overarching learning objectives it was not only difficult to evaluate what courses met marker requirements but also impossible to create or identify an appropriate assessment to measure the program’s student learning outcomes. Without consensus on these outcomes or the ability to adjust them, the GEC committees were unable design much less perform meaningful assessment.

3) It was hypothesized that the organization of General Education was not based on learning content but rather on political and financial turf issues. It was suggested that the General Education organization satisfied the political and financial needs but that the discussion of learning content issues was deferred to some indefinite future date. "Because we could not reach agreement on the outcomes we were seeking we put this off until the future. The future is now past". Since clearly articulating measurable outcomes would create discord, dissatisfaction and dissent, there were no incentives to take the next step.

4) Lack of coordination and institutional support may have contributed to lack of General Education assessment. Some committees were aware of the charge of assessment and spent a lot of time looking at models in other institutions and
trying to design a plan for UNCG. A major stumbling block was the absence of stated outcomes in the disciplines. “We understood that the foundation of General Education was discipline-based and embraced the idea of discipline-specific expectations. Even though the idea of disciplines articulating specific outcomes was mentioned, we saw no follow-up or coordination.”

5) With the pressure of SACS, there was no time for a meaningful sequence of outcome identification, plans for assessment (specific to departments and disciplines) and implementation. We had read about assessment at other institutions that had successfully followed that sequence. Our plans seemed rushed and lacked acknowledgement of disciplinary distinctions.

6) The number of GEC committees was proposed as a contributing factor, since it made it difficult to bring all of the chairs together at one time. The very structure of the GEC committees may make ongoing assessment difficult. Assignment to the committees is frequently through default with the promise of low commitment required. As such the level of investment in the GEC process is limited. Some committees do not even meet and have only “virtual” meetings with the majority of the work done by the committee chair and the evaluation of courses for GEC limited to voicing concerns if there is disagreement with the actions of the chair.

7) A major frustration was the lack of authority, resources, and coordination. We discussed the negative impact of every committee independently asking every department for assessment data at different times during the semester. We knew that the requests from a committee chair would be ignored. When the committees did attempt a small-scale assessment, we encountered the problem of noncompliance. The committees concluded that meaningful assessment would not happen unless implemented and coordinated by higher institutional levels.

8) It appears that the mandate to develop assessment activities was unfunded, unrecognized, uncoordinated and unsupervised. Although several GEC committees did perform some assessment planning there was not the structural support available to move from planning to action. As a result action was deferred until further support for assessment activities was available.

9) The General Education Plan may be overly ambitious. Assessment expectations exceeded the scope or the authority of the GEC Committees to implement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability of the GEC Chairs to respond to this situation</th>
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<tr>
<td>The GEC Chairs did not feel that they have the authority to address these concerns and feel that it is appropriate to request that the General Education Review Taskforce, the University Curriculum Committee and the Office of the Provost take action to address these concerns.</td>
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</table>
Observations, Recommendations

The expectations of the GEC Committees to perform assessment appear to be unworkable. It is felt that the committees have the competence to evaluate courses, but committee members do not feel that they have the time, interest, or expertise necessary to perform assessment. Furthermore, they do not have the authority to successfully enforce cooperation in assessment activities. Time demands and other committee obligations preclude greater investment in the process. It is felt that if greater levels of participation were required that defections or even more limited participation would result. It was additionally felt because of the transitory nature of committee membership, it would be difficult for committees to develop the necessary expertise to make significant contributions to assessment activities. Committee chairs recommend that the assessment functions be separated from the course approval function. It is felt that there needs to be an entity that has the expertise to conduct, evaluate and interpret assessment data, and that the GEC Committees should respond to information provided by this entity. GEC Committees should be the consumers rather than the producers of assessment data.

The number of committees and the number of people on the committees may make the work of the committees more difficult. The complexity of having ten committees independently seeking access to students for assessment appears to be unmanageable. Coordination of these activities across the campus is required and this is not possible from within the GEC Chairs Structure.

It is recommended that we elicit support to begin the assessment of those marker areas that are most easily quantifiable while alternate strategies are explored for those markers that are difficult to measure and may require revision. We cannot afford to defer action until all marker issues are resolved.

Finally, the success of any assessment activities is dependent upon the unequivocal support of the faculty and university administration. Without adequate financial and organizational support any attempt at assessment will be doomed to failure. This means that additional resources must be designated to support assessment functions, administrative agencies must publicly support these efforts, and that issues of non-support are addressed. If assessment efforts are tangibly supported they will be done, if they are evaluated, recognized, and rewarded, they will be done well.
APPENDIX J2: LETTER FROM LISA TOLBERT

The original form of this letter is an email from Lisa Tolbert to Bob Hansen and Kathleen Rountree. Kathleen asked Lisa if we could share her comments with GERTA, and she replied “I'm very glad you found my comments helpful and would be happy for you to share them with the taskforce. Lisa”

-----Kathleen Rountree K_ROUNTR/facultystaff/uncg wrote to Lisa: -----
"Lisa - your well-expressed comments are just the type of information our GEC Review taskforce needs, because they are considering how the GEC markers and the GEC core committee designation of the markers is working, and or how either of those might need to be changed.

I'd like very much to share your email with the taskforce. Would you give me your permission to do so? “
Kathleen
Dr. Kathleen Rountree
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education

Original Email
Subject: GHP FMS approval and course approval process

Hi Bob,

As a follow-up to our phone conversation this week, I wanted to let you know that after some initial hesitation on the part of some members, the GHP committee came to a consensus to approve the proposals for FMS 161 (Berlowitz) and 160 (Jackson).

I am taking the liberty of copying Kathleen on this message because I thought it might be useful for both of you to hear my concerns about the GEC review process based on my recent experience serving as interim chair of the historical perspectives committee. First, reviewing the two Freshman Seminar proposals has made the committee aware of a direct conflict in the guidelines for Freshman Seminars (which are emphatically described in the faculty handbook as thematic rather than foundational), and the learning objectives for the GEC Historical Perspectives category (which emphasize that courses should be foundational). It would probably be useful to take a look at how this apparent conflict should best be addressed.

Beyond this specific issue, however, I have some very basic concerns about how GEC has complicated the course approval process. If I understand correctly how the process works, in order to get WI, HP, and GL markers, a course proposal has to make its way thru 3 committees in addition to the College/Unit and University curriculum committees. The proposal must also be reviewed by other departments to avoid possible course duplication. This seems a very cumbersome process that raises potentially unnecessary obstacles for new course approval.
In our recent deliberations on the GHP committee, for example, a few questions were raised about course content that simply were not related to the charge of the committee. I expect that as the membership of GEC committees changes, the interpretation of learning objectives may change from year to year. With so many opportunities for faculty from different disciplines and perspectives to review course proposals, I can imagine instructors who have invested a good deal of time and thought into developing a proposal, having to respond to requests for changes or questions raised about course content as the proposal makes its way through each stage of approval. I am concerned that we have made the course approval process (particularly for general education courses) increasingly difficult over the years. The process needs to be more instructor-friendly. There must be a way that we can achieve a better balance in the system and a more streamlined approval process. The flexibility of the curriculum--the ability to update and refresh course offerings--is an important factor for overall institutional quality. I expect that there are no easy solutions, but I wanted to share my concerns.

Best wishes, Lisa

Lisa C. Tolbert
Associate Professor
History Department
UNCG, P.O. Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170

Phone: 336.334.4646
Fax: 336.334.5910
Student Focus Groups on General Education

The Office of Academic Assessment, at the request of the General Education Review Taskforce, scheduled four focus groups with a diverse group of undergraduate students to determine their perception of general education. The Office of Academic Assessment identified the following groups that were felt to be assessable within the time frame available: two university studies (orientation) classes, one group of student leaders (taken from student government and student organizations), and one group of multicultural students (from the Office of Multicultural affairs). Teachers of the orientation classes were contacted and granted permission to hold focus groups with students during their normal class session. A list of names of Student leaders was provided by Student Affairs and Student Government and the Office of Multicultural Affairs to identified potential minority student participants. As incentives for participation student leaders and multicultural students were offered pizza, refreshments, and a chance to win a $25 gift certificate to the bookstore.

Method

Student facilitators received training from the Office of Academic Assessment using the moderators guide in Appendix A. Student facilitators received additional training on general education and were informed of the purposes of GERTA to assist in facilitating the focus groups.

Sample

Despite contacting students through student government, the Office of Student Life and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the sessions outside of the classrooms were unsuccessful. One student attended each session, and thus did not provide adequate information to include in this analysis.

The orientation classes, which were composed of primarily freshman students provided 36 participants for this study. The students in the orientation classes tended to focus their personal experiences in specific classes rather than direct their discussion toward the goals and accomplishments of general education. Many students concentrated on the mechanics of the process, i.e. advising, and had some difficulty addressing the questions as related to general education.

Analysis of focus group data

The class sessions were tape recorded and group facilitators developed individual reports on the themes that emerged in their focus group sessions. The focus group facilitators, met and discussed their sessions to determine the presence of common themes among the focus groups. The themes identified are shown below.

Summary of themes from both sessions.
**Too many requirements**

- Some general ed classes are good, but not really needed.
- Some are great for exposure and foundation other are unnecessary and should be spent in courses for your major.
- Some requirements are okay and some are just too much.
- GEC courses are great, its good to take them, but do we have to take so many?
- Online courses need to be eliminated and there are too many requirements. If you have a bunch of courses in your major that you need to take, you don’t have enough time to take two years worth of GEC courses.

**Online courses:**

There is a definite lack of consistency with courses, especially the online ones. In some sections of courses, students will learn completely different subjects and not come out knowing the same material. With online courses, students have problems.

**Teaching methods:**

We need better instructors for the lower level courses. If the instructors had more education courses, the classes would run smoother and be more educational.

**Large classes :**

Teachers have a hard enough time teaching the course material, and when there are more students then they can handle, the information gets lost. Students do not pay attention- or the teacher’s focus gets lost.

---

**Major theme in one session only**

**Advising issues:**

Students were upset with how confusing the process is and how it seems that the people who were supposed to know and help them out just made it more confusing. The complexity of the requirements makes them concentrate so much on the mechanics of the process that there is little worry of what will actually be learned inside the classes.

During the sessions, participants were asked to write down one recommendation to give to the taskforce. That information was collected by the Office of Academic Assessment and complied into categories. These recommendations are categorized by theme below below. The following themes were identified: too many requirements, lack of consistency with online courses, the delivery quality of the material, the need for better advisors to clarify the complex process, and the structure of general education.

**Structure of Gen Ed**

- Let the Gen Ed courses cross over into the majors more so students are focused more on their major.
- More variety of GEC courses.
- I think the idea of Gen Ed requirements is important- we do need to learn how to analyze, express, critique, etc. But there are skills we miss- basic finance, career and life planning, basic computer skills.
Lack of Consistency with Online Courses

- The online courses, such as the math courses do not teach the topics in the same manner as in the class. I would learn one way on the notes and have to work them a separate way on the math lab course online.
- Online courses need to be eliminated and there are too many requirements. If you have a bunch of courses in your major that you need to take, you don’t have enough time to take two years worth of GEC courses.
- I think that one of the major problems with Gen Ed courses are the math courses. Online courses are frustrating and I feel as though I am wasting my hard earned money.
- Please make it a point to give students a choice of taking math online or in the classroom during the fall and spring semesters.

Delivery Quality

- Some of the learning styles of students are so diverse that professors may need to try different types in order to reach the entire class.
- Make them more interesting and focus on all or at least try to focus on Multiple Intelligences/learning styles.
- I feel that the relationship between the teacher and the student is an important factor in the success of the student, so I would have to say that the communication between the student and teacher should be improved.
- Some things that could help Gen Ed courses would be to have more interesting teachers. Some just lecture the whole class, when they do that I don’t learn anything. Some could make it more interesting and they could use group work in class sometimes.
- For the GEC classes that are required, there should be a limit to the seats in the class. A class with 100 or more students in it, there is not going to be a good outcome of people passing the class.

Advising

- Have more time set aside for advising and maybe even bring in juniors and seniors to help with the process.
- Have advisors know what the classes are about. Have a better course description, tell what goal each class would fill off of the student learning goals.
- You need to first off get the advisors to advise, and not just rush students when registering for classes. That’s where it all begins. Some people can handle a lot, some people can’t. The classes are great, and they made me very well rounded last semester. Good advisors are needed.
- Have seniors, or those who have experience in certain majors, to assist freshman who are interested in the same major.
- Advisors need to be more informed.
- Coming in first semester freshman year, I was extremely overwhelmed! The GEC courses should be explained and the sheet we received on university requirements. Should be given to all incoming freshman.
Supportive of General Education

- General overall impression- this college is vested in its students and their success
- I think that GEC is really great and beneficial to us as students. Good job.
- I like the general ed requirements.

Off topic

- There is one thing I don’t really like about some classes; the way some professors jump from chapter 5 to 9 and then back to 3. like back and forth. That makes me crazy!
- I think professors should be released from having to publish something every year. That way they can really focus on us.

Summary

The results of the focus groups provide confirmatory evidence of issues already identified by academic advisors and honors students. The limited participation of student leaders and representatives of minority groups could be addressed in future assessment efforts.
Student Feedback on General Education
From the Provost's Student Advisory Committee
Gathered by Kathleen Rountree, Associate Provost

The Student Advisory Committee is composed of students, both graduate and undergraduate, from across the university. On a number of occasions, the discussion includes matters related to General Education. This summary then, includes perceptions from a variety of different discussions.

- Student perception is that the purpose of General Education is foundational, i.e. to teach them basic skills that they need to complete courses in their major.

- Students are highly frustrated by the process of managing all the requirements to obtain courses and markers. They report taking courses they do not care to take just because a particular marker is attached, and they think this is not a student-friendly system.

- Students are becoming very savvy at the 'game' of marker acquisition, seeking out courses that meet 2 or 3 requirements simultaneously. Courses that only meet one requirement are less highly prized.

- Students are frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of logic on which courses have markers and which do not – to their perception, many courses that meet requirements for markers don’t carry them, and they feel shortchanged.

- Students want the ability to take a higher level course in an area and have it substitute for a foundational course, which they may perceive not to be challenging. They have no understanding that a foundational course may in fact be more appropriate than an advanced course because it offer a broader perspective. They simply see this as a wrong rule.
Honors coffee  
December 1, 2005

Themes

The Office of Academic Assessment was asked to host an honors coffee on December 1, 2005. The director of Academic Assessment prepared a series of questions to provide feedback for the General Education Review Task Force. Students were asked in advance to think about their perceptions and opinions of the general education requirements. Approximately 33 people attended, including international students, traditional students, and faculty. Participants were provided written descriptions of General Education Requirements taken from the undergraduate bulletin. They received a brief history of general education and overview of our general education. As a warm up students were asked to explain their perception of the purpose of a college education. After the warm-up students were asked to discuss. “How is UNCG accomplishing its goals for general education?” Discussion of this question included comments by traditional students and faculty; the participation of the 11 international students was minimal.

In the discussion of the warm-up question participants universally agreed that general education was an important part of a college education.

“How is UNCG accomplishing its goals for general education” was recorded and transcribed. Content analysis was performed and the following themes were identified:

- The requirements are too complex. There needs to be simpler requirements that let student diversify their learning, but still take subjects that interest them. (introduced by a faculty member, but picked up on by students)
  - In order to graduate on time, students must take courses that are in multiple categories or have multiple markers, but these courses don’t always follow through on every category or marker.
  - Courses that could or should carry general education markers or categories are excluded from general education because faculty members are unwilling to submit them for review.
  - Scheduling all the required courses is extremely difficult, it does not allow for any room to take classes that are of interest to you, but are not in your major or required.

- The criteria for markers does not appear to be consistently applied
  - Some courses promise to complete multiple requirements of the general education, but then don’t deliver on any of them, leaving the student without the skills promised by the courses.

- The proficiencies that the general education sets are too basic; the classes are repeats of classes that should have been passed in high school.

Participants were asked to write suggestions for the General Education Task Force. Participant comments were organized around the following four major themes. Each theme is listed with verbatim comments.
A. Simplify
- Fewer, simpler requirements! Everyone should take at least one science, one social science, and one humanities course. Make the rest electives. (in a perfect world)
- Simplify the specificity of general education requirements. And make the information of general education requirements clearer (ex. The extra GE requirements that are added to a math major aren’t clearly labeled, and apparently don’t apply to a double major (according to CASA) but do apply according to the undergraduate bulletin.) * make WI markers visible in the scheduling course books for each upcoming semester.
- Reduce the number and complexity of requirements
- General Education is a great idea. However, I agree with several students that the requirements need to be a little less strict. Perhaps the requirements should fall under more generalized categories.
- Simplify and add foreign language.
- Simplify the requirements and broaden the ability of courses to qualify for markers.
- Simplify the requirements for general ed courses so that students might have the opportunity to explore areas of study not required and not part of a major.
- The amount of GEC+CAR requirements make it rather difficult to take classes outside one’s major that they are interested in. I was prevented from getting a minor by too many specific requirements, perhaps relaxing foreign language requirements would help. Also, how about just 3 WI classes instead of 4, just those changes would have allowed me to diversify my education in a major. I would have been more receptive too.

B. Interest
- offer more variety of courses in each category- if more are offered in each category, people will be in the ones they are more interested in (so professors shouldn’t be so hesitant.)
- be creative and interesting. If the students are interested in it, they’ll work hard on it. I think general education is the place that get and think about the other’s opinion.

C. Specific schools or majors
- One advice would be to please go easy on students with biology major. I believe biology majors require way too many that’s from different random subjects.
- As a music major, I am having trouble getting classes outside of the school of music. I came to the “university” to get such an education. I don’t get enough of the skills, I feel, as my colleagues in other schools. The conservatory is a place for someone who wants to be a musician, where I plan on going after my basic education.

D. International perspectives
- GE can be more flexible. I would like to share my experience about GE in Taiwan. GE courses really help students to solve or understand their problems,
because GE offers different knowledge to students. Such as law courses, philosophy, or ethic courses. If students really don’t know the things (knowledge) then they have questions or problems, how can they consider to solve it or find assistance?

- In my opinion, GE should be (must be) required for general students. Except some very outstanding ones whom nations will support strategically. After graduating school, we usually don’t have enough time to learn GE. Its very useful and important time in university.

- In my personal opinion, to study general education program in college is right. I’m not a UNCG student though. I also study college in Korea, and we also have to take some general education courses. Those are really good, but some of them are not useful to some people, so I think school had better give students wider choices. Let them choose what they need.

Additional comments found:

- There are others ways to make sure that students fulfill these proficiencies such as partaking in another program (the honors program) or talking with professors to get extra help or work.
- make every course “general education”, but put markers as to the difficulty of the course.
- Better students (honors, for example) should have fewer requirements
- Consider the role of the university. You are here to serve the students. If your reforms dissatisfy the people they serve, they are, in turn, ineffective.
APPENDIX L: LETTER FROM DR. PAUL DAVIS

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Walter Beale, English  
    Dr. Larry Taube, Information Systems & Operations Management

FROM: Dr. Paul Davis, Exercise & Sport Science

RE: General Education Faculty Forum

DATE: January 17, 2006

With the support of my Dean and my Department Head, I request that the following information be presented as the faculty convenes on January 23 forum to address the question, “Are the goals of the General Education Program appropriate and complete?”. Among the various requirements in our General Education Core, the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle is virtually ignored. This point is not trivial, as physical health affects most other parameters of wellbeing. The growing prevalence of obesity in the US makes this issue particularly timely. As presented below, obesity is a serious public health issue in this country, UNCG does not seem to compare well to other universities in promoting a healthy weight, and our General Education Core currently does little to address this problem.

1. Obesity is associated with a variety of co-morbidities including diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, osteoarthritis, and various cancers. Although most obesity is preventable through proper physical activity and nutrition, we are presently in the midst of an obesity pandemic. Obesity has increased by more than 75% since 1991 and approximately 65% of US adults are now overweight or obese. Although overweight/obesity prevalence is not as high as in middle adulthood, the early adulthood years are critical in shaping health behaviors and outcomes, as new educational, professional, and family responsibilities introduce time constraints that typically result in a decrease in physical activity that lasts throughout adulthood.

2. Using data from the Princeton Review (the same company UNCG cites to tout its “Best Bargain” status), an article in the October 2005 issue of Men’s Health ranked UNCG as 6th in the “Top 20 Fattest Colleges in America”. These rankings utilized such questions as, “Does your school appear to care about how fit you are?” and “How often do you work out?”. Although the survey’s scientific integrity could probably be challenged, the fact that UNCG is anywhere close to appearing on a list of “Fattest Colleges” is inexcusable. Incidentally, one of our sister institutions, East Carolina University, ranks 19th in the “Top 20 Fittest Colleges in America”.


3. **UNCG has no health requirement in its General Education Core.** Although HEA 201 and NTR 213 are listed among an abundance of options, *GEC does not require any courses that promote a healthy lifestyle and totally neglects courses that primarily focus upon physical activity.* Conversely, four of the five larger research-oriented schools in North Carolina that UNCG is consistently compared to (East Carolina, NC A&T, UNC-Chapel Hill, and NC State) have physical activity requirements in their general education curricula. Appalachian State and UNC-Wilmington, both of whom regularly rank among *US News and World Report*’s “Best Colleges”, have physical activity requirements, as well.

There is no doubt that UNCG’s student body would benefit from the inclusion of health requirements in GEC, optimally as a new Health & Wellness category. As a few of my colleagues pointed out in the General Education Faculty Forum website in December, the importance of the integration of physical and mental health has been recognized at least back to the days of Hippocrates. Please consider the following excerpt from ECU’s undergraduate catalog rationalizing the inclusion of Health and Exercise and Sport Science courses in their general education requirements: “Scholarly study in the health promotion and physical activity disciplines promotes the understanding and intellectual abilities essential to making informed decisions about how to lead a healthy, physically active and fit life. Proficiency in engaging in life-enhancing group and individual physical activity is essential to living a healthy, high-quality life. Scholarship in these areas address behaviors and develop skills that have a positive impact on overall human wellbeing.” Similarly, one would hope that UNCG’s curriculum would produce graduates with balanced intellect who would be able to serve as physical and mental role models for society in the Piedmont Triad and beyond.

Unfortunately, I will be able to attend the Faculty Forum on January 23 because I teach at that time. However, I hope that someone else from our Department will be in attendance to address this issue. I will be happy to participate in the planning of any new health-related GEC requirements. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at pgdavis@uncg.edu or 334-3030. Thank you for your consideration.

Cc:  Dr. David Perrin, Dean, Health & Human Performance  
      Dr. Robert Mayo, Assoc. Dean of Academic Affairs, Health & Human Performance  
      Dr. Kathleen Williams, Head, Exercise & Sport Science
Appalachian State University

FACULTY SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND PROCEDURES

CORE CURRICULUM COUNCIL

Note: the Core Curriculum Council acts independently on "markers", and recommends course approvals or changes in Core Curriculum requirements to the Academic Programs and Procedures Committee.
East Carolina University

FACULTY SENATE

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Note: The Academic Standards Committee makes recommendations to the University Curriculum Committee on general education requirements and courses. It also reviews courses and reports from the Writing Across the Curriculum Program and the Honors Program.
APPENDIX N1: Time to Degree Performance

This email was sent from Karen Ritter (Institutional Research) to Sarah Carrigan and Kathleen Rountree on December 20, 2005. The SAS outputs are attached, numbered pages 1-6.

Dr. Rountree,
I've been working on answering your Time to Degree question.

So far what I've found is that GEC does not seem to cause students to need more credit hours to graduate, at least not significantly so. HOWEVER, I must warn you that with GEC becoming effective in the Fall of 2001, we only have one year of graduates that came in under the GEC requirements. Because of this imbalance in the sample sizes, I would hesitate to say that this finding will hold into the future. We could see a change in the next few years as we have more graduates (with GEC requirements)... and again we may not...........
What I would comfortably say at this point is that the first year of graduates' (with GEC requirements) average time to degree (measured in credit hours) does not significantly differ from the average of the preceding graduates (dating back to 1998).

If this is something you want to look into further (without waiting for time to pass), you may consider taking a look at hours attained at a certain point in time (i.e. after one year). This could give you insight as to whether GEC students progress at the same rate as AULER students did. And by doing this after the first year, you would have more comparison data for the GEC students. This is just an idea/thought. I may be off base for what you're doing with this information...not knowing how you plan to use these findings.

Results:

I'm attaching the SAS output (in .pdf format) for you.

NOTE: The variable 'GEC' is Y if a student came in at a time when GEC applied to them, 'N' if not.

The first document is comparisons (GEC to Non-GEC) of time to degree in credit hours. Page 1 is overall, page 2 is by college/school, and page 3 to the end is broken out by Major.

The second document is the t test results from SAS, which indicate there's no significant difference in the mean of the GEC = Y and GEC = N groups.

Karen R. Ritter
UNCG, Institutional Research
Senior Research Associate
103 Forney Building
(336) 256-0395
### The TTEST Procedure

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\[ \text{AULER students} = \text{GEC students} \]

### T-Tests

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| tot_hrs2 | Satterthwaite | Unequal | 1185 | -1.44 | 0.1506 |
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### Equality of Variances

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Appendix N2

UNCG Graduates

*Time to Degree by College/School by Major (in Credit Hours)*

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### Uncg Graduates

**Time to Degree by College/School by Major**

* (in Credit Hours)

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APPENDIX N2: GEC course offerings and enrollments

Memorandum

To: Dr. Larry Taube
From: Dr. John Wills
Re: Report from Institutional Research concerning GEC Course Offerings

Based on reports provided by Institutional Research, several courses in each category have not been offered since August, 2003. If these courses appear in the catalog, this may add to the complexity of the system.

Counts of courses NOT offered as GEC courses since August, 2003 are:
glt - 11
gfa - 9
gpr - 14
gns - 5
gnt - 0
grd - 2
gsb - 8
Gl - 35
gn - 19
si - 20
wi - 127

Whether or not these courses add confusion is not clear. Some of these courses changed names and are now being offered under their new names. Others appear to be legitimate cases where the courses are on the books as GEC courses but are not regularly offered.

A more systematic follow-up with Institutional Research and/or the Registrar's Office should occur, so we can determine the extent to which these courses are inflating the offerings in the undergraduate catalog. If they are not being printed in the catalog in large numbers, there may be less cause for concern. The UCC might want to consider some mechanism that could be put into place for reviewing courses that are infrequently offered.

NOTE: The original source document from Institutional Research is 57 pages long, containing all GEC Courses offered between Fall 2003 and Fall 2005, inclusive. We have posted this document on the Blackboard discussion web site:
https://blackboard.uncg.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=community&url=%2Fbin%2Fcommon%2Fcours e.pl%3Fcour se_id%3D_53019_1.

Please contact Larry Taube if you need assistance with this document.