

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

General Education Program: Five Year Review

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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 Uprichard, 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.

GERTA TASK FORCE REPORT

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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

Part I: Information Gathering (September 2005 – February 2006)

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 I: Taskforce analysis of information and preparation of report (Feb 2006-March 2006).

Part I: 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.

Stakeholder Group	Group Description and/or Data Collection Method	Full comments and/or minutes are located in:
Faculty and Staff	Blackboard Discussion Site	Appendix F
Faculty and Staff	Faculty/Staff Forums	Appendices G and H
Advising Council	Regular meeting of Council	Appendix I
GEC Core Chairs	Two meetings of Chairs	Appendices J1 and J2
Students	UNS101 students, Student Leaders, and Multicultural Students	Appendix K1
Students	Provost’s Student Advisory Committee	Appendix K2
Students	Honors Students	Appendix K3

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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 - N2) GEC courses offerings and enrollments (Fall 2003 to Fall 2006)

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 to be 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:

1. Student responses about attainment in general education areas on the Senior Survey, Spartan Experience Survey and Alumni Survey.
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

4/17/2006

Task Force Report on General Education Requirements

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 mechanisms are in place to ensure cooperation in assessment activities.

Appendix D

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.