

General Education Committee Annual Report, 2019-2020

General Education Committee Members

Faculty Representatives

Keith Graham, Journalism (2021) Co-Chair
Elizabeth Metcalf, Forestry (2021) Co-Chair
Greg Peters, Missoula College (2020)
Steven Schwarze, Communication Studies (2021)fall
Joel Iverson, Communication Studies (2021)-Spring
Ray Fanning, Radio-TV (2021)
Paul Muench, Philosophy (2022)
Jill Howard, Mansfield Library (2022)
Ginger Collins, Speech, Language Hearing Science (2022)
Ione Crummy, MCLL (2022)
Sarah Certel, Division of Biological Sciences (2022)

Student Members

Brian Fulton
Ethan Hanley (spring)
Zoe Nelson

Additional Representatives (Ex-Officio)

Nathan Lindsay, Vice Provost
Joe Hickman, Registrar
Brian French, Executive Director, Office of Student Success

Responsibilities outlined in the Faculty Senate Bylaws

The primary responsibility of the General Education Committee is ongoing evaluation and assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the general education requirements and criteria. The General Education Committee acts as an advocate for general education, proposes revisions to its requirements and criteria, reviews proposals, and ensures that all general education requirements are feasible within campus constraints, Board of Regents policies, and legislative actions.

General Education Course Review

In the fall the Committee reviewed and approved 5 new general education courses, a one-time only course, and a program language exemption . There was an additional course and language exemption approved in the spring.

Course	Title	Group
JRNL 257	Beginning Visual Journalism	Expressive Arts
HSTA 220	God: Past, Puzzle, Present	Historical Studies

SW 100	Introduction to Social Welfare	Social Science
PHL 309	The Art of Living	Ethics
PUBH 475E	Issues in Medical and Public Health Ethics	Ethics (spring)
CLAS 391	Migration, Displacement & Exile	Global and international
CAS 231	Pharmacology and Addictions	Natural Science without lab
BFA	ART	Language Exemption
BS	Environmental Science and Sustainability program (multiple options)	Language Exemption (spring)

After discussion the committee determined that the Multidisciplinary Bachelor's Degree did not fit the criteria for an exemption to the general education language requirement.

The Committee approved Environmental Studies request to retroactively approve ENST 225, Sustainable Communities for S and Y. The instructor taught the course fall 2018 when it was reviewed and approved by the General Education Committee. The attributes were added for fall 2019.

Rolling Review

The General Education Committee also conducted the rolling review of Historical Studies (H), Democracy and Citizenship (Y) and Cultural and International Diversity (X). In general, most of the courses did not supply adequate evidence of assessment and several needed clarification regarding assessment plans and were missing general education learning outcomes on course syllabi. The Committee sent several follow-up communications specifying the need for revision. Vice Provost Lindsay offered two workshops on assessment. Unfortunately, these were poorly attended. A [video](#) of the first workshop is posted to the committee's website. The [PowerPoint instructions](#) were updated to provide additional information as well. These were sent with communications to the instructors whose courses did not receive full approval.

Vice Provost Lindsay met with the Professor of NASX 201 to clarify assessment and it was subsequently granted full approval. Committee members met with instructors of two courses to clarify assessment requirements. NASX 231X and 122Y were given provisional approval.

The [Rolling Review Summary](#) was presented to ASCRC on March 31 and to the Faculty Senate on April 23. During the review the committee realized that new general education courses approved in the last three years also require revised forms with assessment evidence. The General Education Assessment Report section on the form includes the following language: *"If this information is not yet available, Items VI. B- D must be completed within one year (re-submit the entire form with these sections completed)." This language was edited by the committee so that instructors had until after the next offering of the course to resubmit by the curriculum review deadline. It also includes this clarification statement: Your course will be granted provisional status until the report is received. Report not required for one-time-only general education offerings.*

	Historical Studies (H)	Democracy and Citizenship (Y)	Cultural & International Diversity (X)
Full Approval	9	3	5
Provisional	28	7	33
Provisional (New)	5	5	4
Remove (not subm)	16	5	11
Remove (not meet criteria)	3		

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The committee is concerned with the disparity in the number of offerings for Democracy and Citizenship compared to the other general education categories.

Planning for next year's rolling review

- The next three groups scheduled for review are Literary Studies (L), Mathematics and Natural Science (N). The communication about the Assessment workshop notified department chairs of the groups scheduled for next fall so they could plan ahead. These groups were mentioned in the notice of the assessment workshops.
- Professor Vonnessen, Mathematical Science requested that mathematical courses that have other general education mathematics courses as prerequisites be exempted from the review. The Department requests that M 133, M 172 and M 182 be removed from the current list because they fall into this category. The Committee considered the request and prefers the language "*or a mathematics course of 3 or more credits for which one of these is a prerequisite*" be eliminated from the general education section of the catalog. Currently all the mathematic courses with other mathematics courses as prerequisites are programed as general education courses.
- The Co-Chairs met with Vice Provost Lindsay to clarify the assessment requirements for accreditation. Faculty should assess their courses at least twice in the review cycle to complete the feedback loop.
- The Committee considered using Submittble for the general education review forms, but decided to use CourseDog since it is expected to be implemented next fall for curriculum forms. Several members attended the CourseDog information session and are excited for the implementation.
- The General Education Forms were revised to:

- include a check box for a *revised with assessment* category
- space for when the course is *next offered*
- clarification of when the revised form with assessment data is due
- clarification that one-time-only general education courses are not required to submit an assessment report
- language that addresses multiple sections.

Data analysis

The Committee hoped to review data on how frequently existing general education courses are offered, the instructor of record and the course description. However the data from Registrar's Office includes future semester dates, so was very confusing. The Committee was hoping to have the last term the course was offered and the enrollment. The data (2015-2017) analyzed by Professor Sala in 2018 was more useful.

Policy and Procedure Items

- The revisions to 202.40 General Education Review and Assessment [procedure](#) were approved.

Planning for General Education Reform

Committee members participated in a planning session on February 26th facilitated by Professor Laurie Young, a colleague of Professor Metcalf's and a trained facilitator. The goal of the session was to be proactive regarding the process and timeline. A [report](#) of the session was created and recommendations were presented to ECOS on April 9th and the Faculty Senate on April 23rd.

Communication items

- The Faculty Senate Chair attended the first meeting to suggest the UM Core Pilot be put on the back burner since the charge was given by the interim administration. Provost Harbor confirmed the committee could delay efforts on the pilot until a revised budget model is clarified. He also asked that the Committee summarize issues it would like addressed in the budget model. The response is appended below.
- Members were provided with the program review information for Global Leadership Initiative because it includes best practices, such as an interdisciplinary seminar course, that could potentially be incorporated into the UM Core.

- Chair Graham spoke to MSU's Vice Provost about their efforts to refresh general education. MSU has over 500 courses. They have identified three common themes that each gen ed course should include. Their current program was revised in 2004 and was supported by a grant from Hewlett Packard received in 1999.

Appendix

To: Jon Harbor, Executive Vice President and Provost

From: General Education Committee

Date: October 4, 2019

Re: Response to September 12, 2019 memo: General Education Model Revision

Last year the General Education Committee (GEC) identified several issues where existing budget allocation practices and incentives complicate efforts to revise general education and/or develop a UM Core. We would like to see the following issues addressed in a new budget model in order to better support these efforts.

First, the GEC has observed that the pattern of general education offerings is deeply entangled in budget allocation practices that focus heavily on SCH. The Committee believes there may be a correlation between the proliferation of general education offerings and inadequate funding for general education. Units adjust major courses to fit general education to increase enrollment since the current budget is determined by student credit hour.

At the same time, there are legitimate reasons for departments to seek general education designations: to insure breadth in general education, to encourage students to explore new topics and areas of study, and to attract potential majors. Some programs use general education courses to market their majors, so fear losing their place in the general education program.

Therefore, a new budget model needs to take these issues into consideration and provide greater clarity as to how general education at UM will be funded. The budget model should not create competition for student credit hours, and the administration needs to be able to show programs that changes to the general education program will not have a negative impact on their budgets.

Second, the GEC has observed several barriers to innovation in general education, particularly with respect to interdisciplinary team-taught courses. Again, the allocation of SCH is a part of the issue here, as well as equitable workload assignments. The value of such courses should be reflected in how faculty and units are credited, regardless of the funding source or course rubric. In addition, team-teaching is a time-intensive endeavor, and faculty may not see an incentive in pursuing such activity if that time and effort is not rewarded, personally or for their department.

Therefore, a new budget model should insure adequate funding for programs teaching general education courses, particularly to incentivize the development of innovative interdisciplinary general education courses without harming existing departmental budgets. Buyouts and faculty development grant should be available for tenure-track faculty to teach these courses.

Third, the GEC has observed a need to strengthen the first-year experience. The Committee recognizes the importance of the first-year seminars and creating student cohorts, but would like to see a stronger connection to academic content and high-impact practices. This clearly has budget implications. For example, one way to insure content consistency would be to have a master lecture with breakout sections. Multiple sections of this type of experience will need funding. In addition, some faculty teaching freshmen seminars are not being compensated. Moreover, student engagement best practices need to be incorporated into that experience as well as in general education courses, but these often require resources. Therefore, a new budget model should establish a funding mechanism to support these activities and ensure that students have access to these experiences.

Finally, the GEC observes that any significant revision of general education or implementation of a UM Core require a level of commitment beyond voluntary service on the committee. For example, a prior proposal from Regents Professor Borgmann advocated for a GE oversight committee led by a faculty member who would have a half-time buyout/appointment to manage general education. According to the Faculty Senate Bylaws “The primary responsibility of the General Education Committee is ongoing evaluation and assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the general education requirements and criteria. The General Education Committee acts as an advocate for general education, proposes revisions to its requirements and criteria, reviews proposals, and ensures that all general education requirements are feasible within campus constraints, Board of Regents policies, and legislative actions.” The rolling review of general education courses ensures that they are still meeting the established learning outcomes, but does not reflect on whether courses are missing from content areas. The committee is not taking a formal position on this issue at this point, but we bring it to your attention for further discussion.

cc: M. Hendrix, ASCRC Chair
M. Pershouse, Faculty Senate Chair

C. Palmer, Faculty Senate Chair-Elect
N. Lindsay, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
S. Bodnar, President of the University of Montana

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