

MEMORANDUM

TO: Felix Ngassa, Chair of the Executive Committee of the University Academic Senate
CC: C. Griff Griffin, Director, General Education Program
FROM: General Education Committee—Gabriele Gottlieb, Chair
DATE: April 4, 2021
SUBJECT: General Education Committee End-of-Year Report

The General Education Committee (GEC) met virtually 12 times this year from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Monday afternoons. We can report progress in the following areas.

Curriculum: We received 18 course proposals and at this point have reviewed all proposals. We approved 14 courses so far with 4 more courses not having returned after an amendment request. Most of the courses were part of the PK-6 program revision by the College of Education. Reviewing and approving the courses took much of the fall semester. We also reviewed five Special Topics courses, **update after meeting 4/12.**

Assessment: We reviewed 11 Course Assessment Reports (CARs) as instructors decided to complete the assessment despite the interruptions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. CARs are reviewed by groups of committee members but any questions or concerns are raised before the committee as a whole. We also respond to each CAR individually with a feedback rubric to the faculty who assessed the course. Of the 11 CARs reviewed, we rejected 1 CAR while the others were approved. The dedication to high quality instruction by faculty was evident in the authors' thoughtful and in-depth reflections throughout the CAR reports.

Issues that need to be addressed:

- Historical Perspectives: The description of this Foundation category needs revision to ensure that course proposals address history as a discipline rather than indicating that addressing the past is sufficient.
- Linked to the issue above, the lower level of the General Education Program has no place to include interdisciplinary courses and academic disciplines that have developed more recently. The GEC discussed this issue as a UAS charge in 2017/2018 and, after extensive discussion, decided not to make any changes to Foundations.

UAS Charges, 2020-21:

1. Assessment Implications of COVID-19

Make recommendations about scaling back or delaying assessment of GE courses during the fall of 2020 while considering our assessment plan to satisfy HLC expectations. Consult with Chris Plouff from the Provost's Office.

In the fall semester, the GEC called on ECS and UAS to pause GE assessment for the academic year of 2020/2021 based on the Provost's request to reduce faculty workload during the Covid-19 pandemic. This mirrored a similar request of the University Assessment Committee. We saw this as the only way for the Committee to significantly reduce the workload of faculty teaching GE courses as well as reducing the workload of committee members. The request was approved.

2. Teaching about Systemic Racism

Review the General Education curriculum - particularly US Diversity and Global Perspectives student learning outcomes – and recommend revisions to increase students' understanding of the impact of systemic discrimination and racial inequity on individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

The GEC discussed this charge during the winter semester and took the following actions:

- We revised the description of U.S. Diversity and developed a Student Learning Outcome directly addressing teaching about systemic racism. The revision will be sent to the chairs of the departments that are part of this category for approval and/or potential revision in Fall 2021.
- We also discussed Global Perspectives but were unable to agree on a revision. We decided to contact the departments teaching in this category for input considering the wide variety of courses represented in the upcoming fall semester. Discussions mainly revolved around questions of the long-term impact of colonialism and imperialism and the resulting economic, social, and political inequalities.

GEC members agree that discussing the impact of systemic racism and teaching about it is a conversation that should not be limited to this committee but also has to take place on the department and college levels as well as in the larger campus community.

3. Equity in Learning

Review the data from the General Education learning outcomes assessment from the previous two cycles to determine whether they reveal demographic differences in student learning outcomes and make recommendations.

We discussed this charge during the winter semester. The Director of the General Education Program, with the help of GE administrative staff, provided the committee with data based on the last two cycles (6 years total; 2013-2019) of GE course assessment. The Committee has begun to discuss the data and will submit a full report with recommendations to ECS/UAS in the fall. Below is a brief summary of the results.

The methodology used to determine potential inequities in learning across various student populations is the Percentage Point Gap analysis "Equity-Minded Inquiry Series: Data Tools"

(2020) by the Center for Urban Education at the Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. This allowed for an analysis of assessment data for different student populations based on race, sex, Pell Grant status (proxy for socio-economic status), and first-generation college students across the broad categories of the General Education Program (Foundations, Cultures, and Issues). As the reference group we chose the “Highest Performing Group (HPG),” which was determined by the data.

Key:

- No Equity Gap < 3% difference
- Equity Gap \geq 3% difference between highest performing group (HPG) and another group
 - Small gap: 3-6%
 - Moderate gap: 7-10%
 - Significant gap: 11+%
 - Negative percentage – non-HPG group performed higher than HPG group

BIPOC – includes students who identified as African American, Black, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic, Latino/a, or selected multiple races.

Comparison of Assessment Data for BIPOC and white students:

- Knowledge SLOs:
 - Foundations: Inequity in learning, in some cases significant inequity, exists in all Foundations (3%-13%) with highest gaps in Mathematical Sciences (13%) and Historical Perspectives (12%). Lowest gaps are seen in Social and Behavioral Sciences (3%) as well as Philosophy and Literature (3%). In all Foundations, the highest performing group (HPG) were white students with the exception of seniors in SBS where BIPOC were the HPG group.
 - Cultures: A small equity gap is seen in U.S. Diversity (5%) with white students being the HPG while no gap is observed in Global Perspectives (2%).
 - Issues: With the exception of Issues: Identity (no gap – 2%), all Issues show an equity-in-learning gap (6%-15%) with the largest gaps in Sustainability (15%) and Health (13%). The HPG for all Issues categories except for Identity (no gap) were white students.
- Skills SLO:
 - When it comes to Skills SLOs, inequity in learning exists in all Skills (3%-12%) with the HPG being white students. Information Literacy (12%) and Integration (9%) are the skills with the highest level of inequality.

Comparison of Assessment Data based for female and male students:

- Knowledge SLOs:
 - Foundations: An equity-in-learning gap exists in all Foundations (-6%-6%) but varies significantly over the years (first-year through senior) and which student group (male or female) was the highest performing group (HPG). For Mathematical Sciences, for

example, first-year and sophomore female students were the HPG but for junior and senior years, male students were the HPG.

- Cultures: There is an equity-in-learning gap in both Global Perspectives (4%) and U.S. Diversity (9%). Female students were the HPG.
- Issues: An equity-in-learning gap (-6%-12%) is present in all Issues categories except for Issues: Human Rights. Female students were the HPG in four Issues categories with the largest gap in Identity (12%) and Health (9%). Male students were the HPG in Information, Innovation, or Technology (-6%).
- Skills SLOs:
 - The analysis shows an equity-in-learning gap for six of the nine Skills SLOs. The highest gap is seen in Integration (8%). Female students were the HPG.

Comparison of Assessment Data for Pell Grant and No Pell Grant students:

- Knowledge SLOs:
 - Foundations: An equity-in-learning gap (3-5%) is observed in three of the eight Foundations although the gap is overall lower than when comparing results based on race and sex. Students without a Pell Grant were the HPG.
 - Cultures: There is no equity-in-learning gap between students with or without a Pell Grant.
 - Issues: Five of the six Issues categories have no equity-in-learning gap. Issues: Sustainability is the only category that shows a gap (4%) with the HPG being students without a Pell Grant.
- Skills SLOs:
 - In seven of the nine Skills SLOs, an equity-in-learning gap (3-9%) is observed with Information Literacy (9%) and Quantitative Literacy (8%) showing the largest gaps. No gap was observed in Problem Solving and Integration. Students without a Pell Grant were the HPG.

Comparison of Assessment Data based for first-generation and non-first-generation students

- Knowledge SLOs:
 - Foundations: An equity-in-learning gap was observed for two of the eight categories. The two Foundations are Historical Perspectives (6%) and Life Sciences (3%). The HPG were students who were not first-generation students.
 - Cultures: There is no equity-in-learning gap between first-generation students and students who are not first-generations students.
 - Issues: No equity-in-learning gap was observed for any Issues category.
- Skills SLOs:
 - Seven of the nine Skills SLOs show an equity-in-learning gap (3-4%). Non-first-generation students were the HPG.

The GEC will submit a full report with conclusions and recommendations to ECS/UAS in the fall semester once the committee finished discussing the data

4. Mid-Year Report

In an effort to engage more faculty in our shared governance system, prepare a 1-2-page mid-year progress report at the end of the Fall semester to be disseminated to ECS/UAS and College Deans (a full report is expected as usual at the end of the year).

A mid-year report was submitted to ECS.

A few last words as the outgoing chair:

I would like to thank all members of the committee, the Director of the General Education program, and GE's administrative staff for their excellent work over the last four years while I chaired the committee. It was a pleasure working with each and every colleague to ensure a strong and engaging General Education Program. I am deeply grateful for the rigorous discussions and exchange of ideas over the last four years and appreciate the tremendous amounts of work members of the committee shouldered throughout the years.

The GEC benefited greatly from the pausing of assessment due to the pandemic as this freed up time to discuss the charges of teaching about systemic racism and equity in learning. Without such pause we would not have been able to devote the necessary time to these important and urgent issues.

With this said, I also would like to once again request that the GEC chair automatically receives a course release for that service not only in return for time spent but also as a recognition of the important work the GEC does year after year. Only that way equitable access to leadership positions in service throughout the university can be guaranteed while recognizing the wide variety of responsibilities all of us have whether that is to our departments, our families, or our communities. Especially in the light of the pandemic, which has once again greatly highlighted inequities in the workforce, including in academia, on so many levels, it is essential that the university guarantees a work atmosphere with equitable opportunity to serve in leadership positions and one that recognizes the challenges and realities of life faculty face beyond the campus.

Attendance: The GEC met twelve times. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I am omitting attendance from this report although overall attendance remained high.

Gabriele Gottlieb - GEC Chair, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Abdullah Alrebh, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Phyllis Curtiss, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Dori Danko, Seidman College of Business

Brian Drake, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Shirley Fleischmann, Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

Maya Hobscheid, University Libraries

Kim Lohr, Kirkhof College of Nursing (vacant for winter semester)
Leon Lou, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Dennis Malaret, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Emily Nichols, College of Community & Public Service
Rachel Peterson, Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies
Linda Pickett, College of Education
Robert Rozema, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Amy Stolley, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Chad Sutcliffe, College of Health Professions (winter only; vacant in fall)
Patrick Thorpe, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Ex Officio Members:

C. Griff Griffin, Director, General Education
Ellen Schendel, Office of the Provost