



UH Mānoa
GENERAL
EDUCATION

Findings from the Internal Review of General Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa



**Submitted by the General Education
Program Review Steering Committee:**

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INTRODUCTION

The current General Education curriculum at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) was implemented in 2001. Since its inception, there has been no comprehensive review conducted on the program and its requirements. In January 2017, the General Education Committee (GEC) unanimously voted into effect a review process that was created through joint efforts between the GEC and the General Education Office (GEO). The GEC, which is responsible for setting policies with regard to the General Education curriculum, and the GEO, which is responsible for implementing these policies, agreed that it was important to conduct a review of the General Education Program before any recommendations for reform were made.

The GEC established a Steering Committee composed of GEC and Board members, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the GEO Assessment Coordinator. The Assessment Coordinator took on the role of project manager to ensure that the Committee met its timeline. The Committee was tasked with leading the review of UHM General Education in AY 2017-2018, staged in two parts: 1) an internal review via a self study in Fall 2017; and 2) an external review funded by the OVCAA in Spring 2018. This review establishes a five-year review cycle for the General Education Program moving forward, and provides a baseline for all future reviews.

To help provide the committee with tools to undertake the internal review, the Assessment Coordinator submitted an application to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) for admittance into the 2017 Institute for General Education and Assessment (IGEA). The Institute affords campus teams opportunities to consult with national experts and explore intentional and meaningfully assessed General Education models, processes of redesign, and implementation practices. The UHM team was ultimately invited to participate, and five of the eight Steering Committee members attended the Institute in May 2017. Prior to the Institute, the Committee engaged in strategic planning work to prepare the traveling team for the Institute.

A Good Time for Self-Examination

Across the nation, colleges and universities are undertaking general education reform efforts to better align goals with the learning and workforce needs of their students. Reform efforts are being shaped and spearheaded by AAC&U, a national organization committed to improving undergraduate liberal education. In 2005, AAC&U launched *Liberal Education and America’s Promise* (LEAP) to encourage institutions to deeply reflect on how their general education programs are preparing students to be responsible citizens and professionals in a global society. Institutions are challenged to pursue reform efforts through four main initiatives:

1. Development of Student Learning Outcomes. Institutions should develop student learning outcomes based on the values of the institution and the perceived knowledge bases and skills students need to be successful working professionals and informed, engaged citizens in a global society. Institutions then develop their general education requirements around the agreed-upon learning outcomes. To help institutions think through their outcomes, LEAP developed four *Essential Learning Outcomes*: 1) Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; 2) Intellectual and Practical Skills; 3) Personal and Social Responsibility; and 4) Integrative and Applied Learning.¹

¹ Association of American Colleges and Universities, *The LEAP Challenge: Educating for a World of Unscripted Problems* (2015), <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/LEAPChallengeBrochure.pdf>.

2. Implementation of High-Impact Education Practices (HIPs). HIPs push students to integrate and utilize the knowledge and skills acquired through general education to tackle challenges in their specific areas of study and interest. Students apply learning in meaningful ways to impact their own development and sense-making, building confidence that they are prepared for success after college. Institutions are encouraged to develop signature work experiences such as capstone courses, internships, fieldwork, first-year seminars and experiences, learning communities, and service and/or community-based learning opportunities.²
3. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. Assessing student learning outcomes helps institutions better understand how students are meeting the goals of their general education curriculum, and to identify areas for curricular improvement. In 2009, LEAP developed *Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education* (VALUE) to help institutions in their assessment efforts. This campus-based approach includes the use of rubrics to assess how well students are meeting institutional learning outcomes.³
4. Inclusive & Equitable Pathways. Institutions should ensure that there is intentional alignment between general education and major requirements. Students should be able to apply skills and knowledge to solve problems and find coherence, clarity, purpose and value in their education. This initiative calls for the creation of pathways that lead students to graduate on time, and with confidence that they are prepared to be global citizens and strong members of the workforce.⁴

To help institutions create intentional and holistic pathways, AAC&U launched a national project in 2015 called *General Education Maps & Markers* (GEMs) to provide a comprehensive framework for general education based on five design principles: 1) proficiency; 2) agency and self-direction; 3) integrative learning and problem-based inquiry; 4) equity; and 5) transparency and assessment.⁵

IGEA provided a valuable opportunity for the Steering Committee to think about LEAP initiatives as well as learn more about best practices. The Institute ultimately reinforced that [many campuses](#) across the nation are examining similar issues as UHM and embracing the opportunity to develop intentional and meaningful learning experiences for their students.⁶ The Steering Committee's review plan was well-received by other IGEA teams and Institute experts, providing the committee momentum to dive into its work. Following IGEA, the Steering Committee created a self-study outline and resolved to examine the following major categories: historical background of the General Education Program, curriculum and assessment, operations, and governance.

Given the limited time frame of this review, the committee acknowledges that this report is by no means comprehensive. Recommendations in this report will likely require further analysis and campus-wide discussion to determine if implementation is feasible. However, the self study has

² Tom Schrand, "Design Thinking as a Strategy for Consensus in General Education Reform," *Peer Review* 18, no. 3 (2016), <https://www.aacu.org/peerreview/2016/summer/Schrand>.

³ "Value," Association of American Colleges & Universities, last modified 2018, accessed May 1, 2018, <https://www.aacu.org/value>.

⁴ Paul Gaston L. Gaston, *General Education Transformed: How We Can, Why We Must* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2015).

⁵ Association of American Colleges and Universities, *General Education Maps and Markers: Designing Meaningful Pathways to Student Achievement* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2015).

⁶ Wilson Peden et al., *Rising to the LEAP Challenge: Case Studies of Integrative Pathways to Student Signature Work* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2017).

provided an invaluable opportunity to examine the existing curriculum and organizational structure of UHM General Education, and has yielded substantive documentation for future use.

UHM CURRICULUM

Historical Background and Overview

On December 8, 1999, the UH Mānoa Faculty Senate (MFS) adopted *The Proposal for Modification of UH Mānoa General Education Requirements*. The modifications aimed to provide students a cohesive yet flexible undergraduate curriculum that developed knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking to foster lifelong learning. The new curriculum further aimed to instill in students an appreciation for human diversity with an emphasis on the heritages of Hawai‘i, the Pacific, and Asia. The requirements were divided into two components: Core and Special UHM Graduation Requirements. This division reflected a distinction between requirements that were deemed preparatory to advanced academic work (Core) versus those that could or must be satisfied at the advanced levels (Graduation).

The Core was composed of Foundations and Diversification requirements. Foundations requirements were intended to give students fundamental skills and perspectives and equip them to make connections across multiple fields of inquiry. Full-time students were expected to complete Foundations courses in written communication, symbolic reasoning, and global and multicultural perspectives in their freshman year. The Diversification requirements were intended to broadly expose students to different domains of academic knowledge while providing them flexibility to choose coursework that best met their individual goals and interests. Students were required to take courses within the Colleges of Arts, Humanities, and Literature; Social Sciences; and Natural Sciences. In order to increase the breadth of their exposure to academic disciplines, students had to take courses from two different departments within each College. Students selected or were assigned faculty mentors who would help them find courses pursuant to their academic goals.

The Special UHM Graduation requirements included Focus requirements, a second language requirement, and a “wild card” option. The Focus requirements were intended to give students additional skills and discourses without raising the total credits needed to graduate. Requirements could be satisfied through Diversification or major courses that carried Focus designations. The Focus requirements included courses on Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific issues, contemporary ethical issues, oral communication, and writing. The second language requirement aimed to ensure students acquired proficiency in Hawaiian or a second language since the university’s mission at the time was to “prepare students to function effectively in a global society,” as well as “preserve and promulgate Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific language, history, and culture and provide students an education experience with an international dimension.” To meet this requirement, students had to demonstrate competency at the 202 level in Hawaiian or a second language prior to graduation. The “wild card” option provided an opportunity for students to engage in an extraordinary educational experience such as a study abroad program or an internship. Each student was allowed one “wild card” that could be used to satisfy a three-credit Diversification and/or Focus requirement.⁷

The curriculum changes proposed by the MFS in 1999 were adopted by the Board of Regents (BOR) on July 21, 2000 and implemented in Fall 2001. These changes were framed by the faculty as a necessary reform of UHM’s General Education Program. In consultations conducted for this self study with stakeholders involved with General Education during the reform, it was noted that the

⁷ "The Proposal for Modification of UH Manoa General Education Requirements Appendix B" (December 8, 1999).

process was “difficult,” “divisive,” and “political.” In the years that followed, additional changes were made to the General Education curriculum to clarify, improve, and simplify the existing requirements. On January 23, 2002 the *Proposal for Modification of UH Mānoa General Education Requirements* was turned into a statement of General Education requirements. On March 21, 2007, additional changes were made to the requirements by the MFS, including changing the “Wild Card” option to the “Focus Exemption.” Students were given the option of applying for an exemption from one Focus requirement (instead of a choice of one Focus or Diversification requirement) if they engaged in an extraordinary experience; exemption requests would be reviewed by the GEC.⁸

On September 19, 2007, the General Education requirements were further revised and approved by the MFS. Under this revision, which was framed as an improvement and simplification of General Education, the Hawaiian/Second Language, Diversification, and College/Major requirements were all modified. Modifications to the Hawaiian/Second Language requirement reflected current practices and policies at the time: information about the School/College waiver option was removed, and clarification was provided on the issue of back credits earned from previous language study or experience. The Diversification requirement was revised to remove the faculty mentoring provision. It was determined that Colleges/Majors are not under the purview of the GEC. In addition, the Governance section was revised to limit student representation to the GEC.⁹

Rationale for the Revised Curriculum

Four principles guided the curriculum changes:

1. **Graduation in four years:** The curriculum was designed so that students could reasonably complete General Education and major requirements in eight semesters of full-time academic work. The Core curriculum was reduced from 40 credits to 31 credits to further help students graduate in four years. Students were given the option to receive 3-16 back credits if they met second language competency prior to admission. Students were also given the option to double-dip some of their General Education and major requirements.¹⁰
2. **Coherence and flexibility:** Under the former model, General Education courses were allocated across a small set of Colleges and departments, which restricted options for students. Under the new model, any department or faculty member was able to develop criteria-driven courses, thus creating more options for students to satisfy General Education requirements, especially those within their majors. These changes moved the General Education curriculum away from a one-size-fits-all model to one that gave students more courses to select from based on their individual needs and goals.¹¹
3. **The academic major as anchor:** The new curriculum allowed for students to select General Education courses that complemented the goals of the major, making the student’s major central to a coherent educational experience. This new focus on the major was an attempt to move away from a mentality that General Education courses were a distraction from the major.¹²
4. **Flexible transfer policies/practices:** The curriculum was designed to acknowledge existing articulation agreements and encourage flexibility in recognizing academic work undertaken

⁸ "UHM GenEd: New Challenges New Opportunities" (December 13, 2002).

⁹ "UH Manoa General Education Requirements" (March 21, 2007).

¹⁰ "An Overview of Changes in UHM General Education Requirements Draft" (March 12, 2002).

¹¹ "An Update on Manoa's General Education" (December 2003).

¹² "GenEd Reform at UHM: An Overview of the New GenEd" (n.d.).

in other institutions. As a result, incoming transfer students were able to receive credit for more General Education courses because students were transferring pre-UH coursework based on *criteria* equivalency instead of *course* equivalency.¹³

The new curriculum was also consistent with WASC guidelines since it was integrated across the entire four-year experience. Lastly, continuous evaluation of the curriculum was mandated through periodic review of courses carrying General Education designations. Course review was expected to be conducted by faculty Boards representing varied experiences and disciplines. This new framework was an attempt to make the program dynamic and evolving on a regular basis.¹⁴

Learning Objectives

The General Education curriculum seeks to encompass the broad range of fields that are characteristic of a liberal arts education, as well as cultivate skills deemed important for success both during and after a student’s academic career.

While the General Education curriculum is recognized as having a leading role in fulfilling the UHM Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs), current mapping diminishes the value of General Education to the undergraduate experience as evidenced in the table below of Policy M5.321 Institutional Learning Objectives for Undergraduate Students (*Academic Policy*, 2012):

1. Know -- Breadth and Depth of Knowledge Students develop their understanding of the world with emphasis on Hawai'i, Asia, and the Pacific by integrating:	Fulfilled through:
1a. General Education	Foundations, Diversification, Focus, and Hawaiian/Second Language requirements
1b. Specialized study in an academic field	Major requirements
1c. Understanding of Hawaiian culture and history	Coursework and/or co-curricular experiences related to Hawaiian culture and history
2. Do -- Intellectual and Practical Skills Students improve their abilities to:	May include:
2a. Think critically and creatively	Solving challenging and complex problems; applying questioning and reasoning; generating and exploring new questions; being information literate: knowledge of procedures, processes, or products to discern bias and arrive at reasoned conclusions; negotiating the terrain of the technological world; reasoning with numbers and other mathematical concepts (numeracy); developing financial literacy

¹³ "Plan for General Education at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Attachment A" (1999).

¹⁴ "UHM GenEd: New Challenges New Opportunities" (December 13, 2002).

2b. Conduct research	Conceptualizing problems and asking research questions; analyzing research data; applying research designs; engaging in self-directed inquiry; using library and information systems
2c. Communicate and report	Written and oral communication; working cooperatively and collaboratively; technology/computer-based communication; non-verbal communication; listening
3. Value -- Personal and Social Responsibility Students demonstrate excellence, integrity, and engagement through:	May include:
3a. Continuous learning and personal growth	Life-long learning; self-assessment, reflection, discipline; ethical behaviors and judgments; intellectual curiosity; habits of scholarly inquiry; personal health
3b. Respect for people and cultures, in particular Hawaiian culture	Respect for differences in cultural and personal identity; social justice; cultural awareness; international engagement; culture/language immersion
3c. Stewardship of the natural environment	Respect for natural resources; sustainability
3d. Civic participation in their communities	Campus organizations; community service; service learning

Adapted from ACADEMIC POLICY M5.321: INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Upon closer examination, it is clear the General Education curriculum could be better mapped into the ILOs. For example, Foundations courses meet the objectives of 2a, 2b, 2c, and 3b rather than just 1a. Contemporary Ethical Issues Focus courses provide learning opportunities to develop responsible ethical decision-making skills, which meets objectives 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, and potentially 3c. Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues Focus courses promote cross-cultural understanding between nations and cultures, which meets objectives 2a, 2c, 3b, and potentially 3c. And Oral and Written Communication Focus courses at a minimum meet objective 2c, yet General Education courses are only acknowledged as meeting the “breadth and depth of knowledge” objective.

Part of the disconnect that currently exists may rest with the fact that the General Education Program does not have clearly articulated learning outcomes that can be linked across the General Education curriculum and throughout the UHM four-year student experience. Linking and integrating clearly-stated outcomes across the curriculum is considered a curricula best practice, especially as applied to general education in higher education.¹⁵

Course Designation Process

¹⁵ Paul Hanstedt, "Current Trends in Liberal Education Curricular Design: A Primer" (lecture, AAC&U Institute 2017, Chicago, IL, 2017).

Despite the absence of clearly articulated learning outcomes, there are several measures that help ensure that proposed courses meet the aims and objectives of UHM General Education. Among the most important of these are, first, the guidelines found on the proposal forms and, second, the review process conducted by the GEC and its Boards.

Proposal requirements differ based on whether the designation is granted to the course (course-based) or the instructor (instructor-based). Proposal requirements also differ across the various General Education designations. The proposal process for a Foundations designation (FG, FS/FQ, FW) is somewhat extensive because these courses are seen as being “foundational” to the undergraduate curriculum. Relatively few courses fulfill this requirement, and all Foundations courses are course-based. Foundations proposals require the submission of a master syllabus or representative syllabi supported by narrative statements and some degree of evidence about how each Hallmark (course criteria) will be met. Proposals typically run longer than ten pages. And, indeed, because the nature and amount of supporting material requested for Foundations proposals is not always clear, in some cases, the Foundations Board has received proposals that run upwards of eighty pages!

To renew Foundations courses, departments must address how their courses are fulfilling the Hallmarks, provide evidence of course assessment, and submit supporting materials from the course (e.g., assignment and lecture materials, student work). This has the benefit of more strongly informing the Foundations Board of what is actually occurring in the course, allowing them to determine to what extent a given course is meeting the goals of the General Education designation. Since there is no ability to audit courses, all Boards must generally trust that proposers are carrying out what they claim they will do in their proposals. For this reason, it is imperative that all Boards either create or further develop an assessment component on the proposal forms so that evidence of student learning can be examined.

Focus designations may be requested either on an instructor- or course-based level. In the case of instructor-based Oral Communication (O) and Writing Intensive (W) Focus designation proposals, the proposer fills out a one-page chart relating to how the course/syllabus fulfills the various Hallmarks. The Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues (HAP) Focus proposal form requires an annotated bibliography, brief narrative statements of how the course fulfills the Hallmarks, and either an annotated syllabus or chart indicating how the course meets various HAP-related requirements. The Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Focus proposal form requires several medium-length narratives indicating the kinds of ethical content covered in the course, the analytical methodologies to be used, and how the course is designed. Course-based Focus forms are more extensive because the designation will be applied more broadly, and typically require medium-length narrative responses relating to how the course meets the Hallmarks of the Focus designation(s) in question, the methods used in the course to reinforce these content areas, and an indication of where the syllabus connects with the Hallmarks.

Because of the relatively large number of Focus proposals submitted, there are separate Boards that review proposals for each of the Focus designations. While the Focus Boards should ideally be comprised of faculty experts in the different Focus areas, faculty often do not have sufficient expertise (e.g., pedagogy relating to oral communication) to confidently assess proposals. The proposal review procedure also differs from Board to Board. For example, due to the large number of W Focus proposals, the W Board has only one faculty member reviewing a given instructor-based proposal, with the option of sharing thoughts on assigned proposals with the entire Board.

Diversification (DA, DH, DL, DB, DP, DY, DS) and Hawaiian/Second Language designations are requested via new course (UHM-1) or course modification (UHM-2) forms. Once a course receives a Diversification designation, no further review or assessment is required. This practice, while understandable given lack of GEC resources, runs contrary to the General Education charge to assess its curriculum through periodic proposal review.

A Need for Broader Curriculum Review

While proposal review is an iterative measure to evaluate the General Education curriculum at the course level, there is a significant need to examine the curriculum at the program and institutional levels. Moving forward, the GEC should consider examining the curriculum through the following lenses:

1. **Curriculum framing:** What is the impact of the structure of the curriculum, including its description in official documents, on how General Education is understood and implemented? Furthermore, is the number of General Education requirements appropriate given the overall number of credit requirements and, in particular, for students majoring in “highly-structured” majors? This is a source of considerable tension given the University’s emphasis on swift time-to-graduation for its undergraduates, most notably through the ["Fifteen to Finish"](#) initiative. Upon initial examination of peer and benchmark requirements it does not appear that UHM is requiring too much from students in the way of credits, but it may be worth further examining how other institutions have framed their requirements.¹⁶
2. **Coherence within the curriculum:** How are skills or content that we value as an institution reinforced over the course of a student’s academic career? Does UHM provide students clear pathways that connect General Education to their majors?
3. **Content and Quantity:** Is the content required in the General Education curriculum appropriate given the needs of students in 21st-century Hawai‘i? Are certain areas or skills being over- or underemphasized, especially in light of the ILOs and other published “values” of the University? Skills and practices that are currently not addressed well within the curriculum include:
 - a. *Oral communication at the foundational level.* It is critical for students to be able to effectively communicate in both oral and written form. Students currently have six opportunities to develop and refine their writing skills. One 300+ level course with an O Focus does not create sufficient opportunities for students to practice and build oral communication skills.
 - b. *Information literacy beyond the foundational level.* There is no intentionally-directed approach that cuts across all majors to provide UHM students with the ability to progress from information literacy to information fluency, thus sharpening critical thinking skills.
 - c. *Problem solving and teamwork.* While some General Education courses may offer opportunities for students to develop skills in problem solving and collaboration, these essential 21st-century skills are not currently addressed in the curriculum as a whole.
 - d. *Integrative and interdisciplinary learning.* The Diversification Subcommittee has noted that they are seeing increasing numbers of transfer requests for interdisciplinary courses. However, these courses are not compatible with UHM’s current requirements, so no credit can be awarded. As more institutions create interdisciplinary learning

¹⁶ UHM General Education Review Steering Committee, 2017-2018, "Overview of General Education Requirements from UHM Peer and Benchmark Institutions" (unpublished raw data, December 2017).

experiences, this will become a greater problem for students transferring to UHM. Additionally, IGEA presenters shared best practices related to integrative learning across disciplines, ePortfolios to catalog student growth and achievement over time, a common core, and capstones. The UHM General Education curriculum does not utilize any of these practices that could bring together the undergraduate learning experience in a meaningful way.

- e. *Attitudes and values.* Respect for diversity of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives may seem inherent in the “Mānoa Experience,” due to the diverse nature of the student body and UHM’s commitment to serving as a Native Hawaiian place of learning. But convenience diversity is not the same as offering an intentional curriculum that teaches students how to understand, respect, correctly articulate, and appreciate difference. This needs to be an appropriately mediated experience and the General Education curriculum is a good vehicle to achieve a meaningful depth of contemplated and articulated perspective.
4. **Effectiveness of Pedagogy:** Are instructors who teach General Education courses aware of the learning goals? How well are they fulfilling and assessing these goals? Are they aware of how their courses fit within the larger undergraduate curriculum, and do they reflect this in their teaching? It is noteworthy that student responses to the UHM Assessment Office’s longitudinal study indicated that one of the four key ways that General Education could be improved would be through “better teachers or better teaching.”¹⁷
 5. **Equity and Articulation:** Does the General Education curriculum attempt to provide equal opportunities for success to all students, especially given the diverse educational, social, racial and experiential backgrounds of our students? Moreover, considering the very high number of transfer students - particularly from UH Community Colleges (CCs) - does UHM’s General Education articulate well with credits these students may have earned elsewhere, allowing them to proceed to advanced coursework and graduation in a reasonable amount of time?
 6. **Institutional Support:** Is the General Education curriculum adequately supported by the University, both in terms of funding and positions in areas of need? Are General Education courses appropriately distributed across various programs and, if not, is this a reflection of a lack of institutional support/encouragement? And what about the balance between the needs of Colleges versus the University as a whole? For example, in certain Colleges, students have been allowed to opt out of General Education requirements. Is this appropriate and how should General Education respond going forward?

General Education and Student Success

Currently, there is not enough data available to determine whether all admitted students are afforded opportunities to succeed at UHM. Equity is a pressing issue at UHM given the wide-ranging socio-economic, ethnic, and experiential backgrounds of its student body which, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, is the most diverse school in the United States.¹⁸

Despite interest in promoting academic success amongst historically disadvantaged groups, no assessment of equity-related issues has been conducted for UHM General Education up to this point.

¹⁷ Manoa Assessment Office, *Student Learning and Student Perceptions: General Education and Institutional Learning Objectives* (2017).

¹⁸ Ben Myers, "The Flagship Diversity Divide," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 5, 2016, <https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/flagship-diversity>.

There is, however, the potential to study this issue in the future. For example, some information is available on low-success rate courses, but it has not yet been analyzed in a systematic fashion or correlated to particular groups of students. The Mānoa Institutional Research Office ([MIRO](#)) does not currently have data on success rates in General Education in connection with student demographics, but has expressed its willingness to run data queries for the GEO and create tools to allow for ongoing querying. Models for demographic analysis of UHM student population have been created by the Office of Student Equity, Excellence & Diversity ([SEED](#)). UHM General Education also does not offer remedial courses in Math or English and thus possibly presents a barrier to students who are otherwise college ready. That said, such classes are available at the UH CCs.

Transfer Students

Perhaps the greatest challenge and opportunity relates to students who transfer to UHM from elsewhere in the UH System or from a non-UH institution. UHM transfer students have comprised 42-48% of each incoming class over the last four years.¹⁹ All students must meet General Education requirements to graduate. This requirement is met through equivalency via transfer credits, the granting of an Associate's degree within the UH System, or by taking UHM General Education courses. Focus requirements generally cannot be met in totality prior to transferring to UHM. In short, General Education requirements impact all transfer students. UHM needs to be welcoming to the transfer student profile in practical and meaningful ways. However, despite various program-based articulation agreements and UH Executive Policy 5.209, this is not always the case in practice.²⁰

A key issue is that curriculum expectations, requirements, and pathways vary down to the numbered sequence of courses across the UH System. This approach does not support clear and cogent articulation. When students first enter UHM from any other institution, the student will adhere to the UHM academic requirements in place for that year and semester. This is known as "Catalog Year" or "Core Year." For transfer students, a change in Core Year may have a negative impact, especially regarding its effect on time-to-graduation. For example, the [upcoming UHM transition](#) from the Symbolic Reasoning (FS) to Quantitative Reasoning (FQ) requirement may impact transfer students about to enter UHM in Fall 2018 who already fulfilled the FS requirement.²¹ As another example, students are impacted when they plan their transfer pathway based on specific published requirements, but later discover that requirements were changed without the official [UHM Program Sheets](#) being updated. Although students followed the correct requirements based on what was published in the Program Sheets, they will now be misaligned through no fault of their own.

In the case of students from the UH CCs, the extent to which they are able to fulfill UHM General Education requirements through transferred courses is an equity issue insofar as these students often come from relatively disadvantaged social and ethnic backgrounds.²² Thus areas of the UHM General Education curriculum that are not easily fulfilled at the UH CCs represent a barrier to timely graduation and cost efficiency for transfer students. Typically, the UHM Office of Admissions evaluates courses and determines equivalency or not, or punts transfer requests for disciplinary review. However, what may be course equivalent at a UH CC may not be so at a four-year institution. Students can secure an Associate's degree and then "reverse transfer," so there are ways to work

¹⁹ "University of Hawaii at Manoa Transfer Overview" (March 14, 2017).

²⁰ Memorandum by David McClain, University of Hawaii President, "Executive Memorandum No. 06-05," August 25, 2006.

²¹ Quantitative Reasoning Working Group (QRWG), "FQ Implementation," Quantitative Reasoning, last modified September 13, 2016, <http://blog.hawaii.edu/quantitativereasoning/implementation/>.

²² "Notes from Consultation with Jennifer Brown, Manoa Transfer Coordination Center (Chair), Kaieie, Council of Academic Advisors (Chair AY 17-18) 09/28/2017 Steering Committee Meeting" (September 28, 2017).

around these issues, but it may be best to pursue a more efficient system as opposed to offering temporary fixes on a case-by-case basis. UHM Admissions has expressed an interest in reconsidering some areas of General Education such as the FG requirement in light of recurring problematic transfer issues.²³

Another issue may be that four-year institutions do not see UH CC courses as equal/equivalent. For example, a student may transfer a math course from the University of British Columbia, which is deemed equivalent to Math 115 at a CC, thus meeting the FS requirement at the CC. However, when that same student transfers to a four-year institution within the UH System, this same course transfers as a DS course, rendering the FS requirement unmet. This may affect trajectory in terms of time-to-graduation and course planning. This lack of equivalency also may lead to higher levels of student dissatisfaction and may be perceived as excessive gatekeeping, which can negatively impact student recruitment and retention.

Assessment Findings

Since 2008, the UHM Assessment Office has led efforts to directly assess how well UHM students are meeting the WASC Core Competencies. UHM is also a member of the *Multi-State Collaborative (MSC) to Advance Quality Student Learning*. Because there is substantial overlap between Core Competencies and the UHM General Education curriculum, the assessment results have provided valuable insight into how well UHM students are doing. Faculty have reviewed and scored student work in the following areas using VALUE rubrics:

1. Written Communication via FW and W Focus courses;
2. Information Literacy via FW courses;
3. Critical Thinking via E and W Focus courses, as well as 300- and 400-level courses addressing quantitative reasoning;
4. Quantitative Literacy (though not currently a General Education requirement); and
5. Oral Communication via O Focus courses (AY 2017-2018).

Not surprisingly, assessment results were highest in Written Communication. The strong results indicate that students benefit from having a foundational writing experience that is reinforced by multiple writing-intensive experiences over the four-year pathway, thus fostering and promoting skill development. The direct assessment findings are further supported by student perception data obtained through longitudinal studies conducted by the Assessment Office: reinforcement and practice matters to students.

The results for Quantitative Reasoning, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy highlight not only a need for improvement in student learning outcomes, but in how UHM collects quantitative data. In particular, there is a need for consistent assignments that can be assessed. Part of the issue with this may arise from the fact that faculty are not necessarily aware that their General Education courses may be used in the data-collection process. For example, Critical Thinking is assessed through assignments collected from E and W Focus courses. There is no indication on the Focus proposal forms or the General Education website that these courses are used toward Critical Thinking assessment efforts. Consequently, there was a high degree of variability in assignments that were collected. As a result, Critical Thinking findings were low: 52% of the student work surveyed met or exceeded expectations for identifying ethical issues; 41% met or exceeded expectations for

²³ "Notes from 10/19/17 Consultation with Ryan Yamaguchi, Associate Director of Admissions" (October 19, 2017).

deliberating responsibly; and 32% met or exceeded expectations for forming a sound ethical judgment.²⁴

In addition to the direct assessment identified above, the Assessment Office has analyzed *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) data to develop further insight into student perspectives on learning opportunities at UHM. Overall, students perceive the value of UHM General Education coursework, particularly if knowledge could be applied in their own discipline and major area of study. For example, students were able to connect undergraduate learning opportunities in oral communication with real life and postgraduate application.²⁵

Notable Assessment Findings

- When faculty pay attention to learning outcomes, we see higher learning results and more students saying they learned; greater exposure to learning outcomes yields higher results.
- Students saw the value of General Education but were frustrated with courses that seemed irrelevant and/or faculty who employed poor teaching practices.
- Students indicated that some repetition is good but more complexity and depth is needed in the curriculum.
- Students see the value of O and W Focus courses and are interested in more oral communication requirements.
- Weakest linkages appear to be in “one-off” requirements like the HAP Focus. There is a need to build more coherency and long-term linkages in the Gen Ed curriculum. Faculty need to understand how to better articulate connections.
- Assignments often do not elicit the types of products that meet the scoring rubrics. It is clear from workshops that have been conducted on assessment and assignment design that faculty struggle with developing clear syllabi and assignments that help students understand what they are supposed to be gaining, how it connects to learning outcomes, etc. Faculty need more support and resources.
- In terms of fostering effective learning, this General Education model is working. Students are perceiving they are learning, and the data supports that students are learning.

Enhancing Assessment Efforts

UHM does not currently have a mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the General Education designations. While the course designation process is useful in illuminating whether courses meet the Hallmarks, it is not currently effective in revealing whether students are achieving the intended learning objectives. Plans are underway to implement *Student Assessment of their Learning Gains* (SALG) as a measure to collect indirect evidence of student learning in General Education courses. This initiative is intended to enhance the direct assessment efforts led by the Assessment Office.

SALG is recommended for project evaluation purposes by the National Science Foundation and is used by organizations such as Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER). Through her work with SENCER, the former GEO Director saw the potential for using SALG within General Education and asked the Assessment Coordinator to consider whether SALG could be utilized for General Education assessment. Together, the Director and Assessment

²⁴ Manoa Assessment Office, *Contemporary Ethical Issues (ETH) Program Assessment Results* (2011), accessed May 1, 2018, http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/reports/pdf/ETH_results_2011-11-14.pdf.

²⁵ Manoa Assessment Office, *Student Learning and Student Perceptions: General Education and Institutional Learning Objectives* (2017).

Coordinator determined there are a number of potential benefits of using SALG:

- Students better understand their learning processes by reflecting on what helped them learn;
- Faculty are provided with course-specific feedback so they can continuously improve their pedagogical approaches and course content;
- Course coordinators can use data to identify best practices that can be shared within their departments;
- The GEC/Boards can examine data to determine whether General Education learning objectives and Hallmarks are being met. Over time, it will be possible to determine whether any learning objectives or Hallmarks require revision for clarity;
- At UHM, SALG data can be used to measure attainment of the ILOs. SALG data is also accepted by WASC as sufficient evidence of student learning for reporting purposes; and
- Within UH System, data could be collected to examine how well articulated courses are meeting learning objectives.

The GEO is currently in process of determining how SALG usage can be effectively implemented across General Education designations. However, a major endeavor that needs to be completed first is to work with the GEC and its Boards on creating clear and measurable learning objectives for each of the General Education designations.²⁶

OPERATIONS

Creation and Evolution of the GEO

The General Education Office (GEO) was established on October 30, 2001 through a *Memorandum of Agreement* (MOA) between the SEC, UHM College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literatures (LLL), and the UHM Chancellor to “assist with the implementation of the General Education curriculum.” The MOA noted that it was possible the GEO could be organizationally moved once strategic planning efforts were finalized by the UHM Chancellor, who was in charge of establishing new structures to serve undergraduate programs at UHM. The GEO was built upon the staff and facilities of the Mānoa Writing Program (MWP), which was housed in LLL. The MWP maintained its current activities and budget but extended its responsibilities to support the GEC and its Boards. Supplemental funds were authorized by the Chancellor via the SEC to hire additional clerical staff and student help.²⁷ In April 2003, a *Memo of Understanding Regarding Relationships Among the Mānoa Faculty Senate/Senate Executive Committee, the General Education Committee, and the General Education Boards* (MOU) was approved to provide guidance on how the various faculty governing bodies would operate with each other.²⁸

In 2006, the GEO/MWP was moved from LLL to the Office of Undergraduate Education and placed under the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education. In August 2010, the GEO/MWP’s budget was consolidated and transferred to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (OVCAA) as a means of stabilizing funding, clarifying reporting lines, and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of the GEO. The change also split the GEO/MWP faculty administrator position into two positions; this split was possible because the faculty administrator (hereafter referred to as

²⁶ Wendi Vincent, "Adopting a New Assessment Approach: Using SALG to Evaluate General Education Learning Outcomes," Infographic, 2017.

²⁷ "Memo of Agreement among the Manoa Faculty Senate (SEC); University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature; And UHM Chancellor" (October 30, 2001).

²⁸ "Memo of Understanding regarding Relationships among the Manoa Faculty Senate/Senate Executive Committee, the General Education Committee, and the General Education Boards" (April 3, 2003).

Director) planned to retire on October 1, 2010.²⁹ The GEO was assigned a .75 FTE Director, and the MWP was assigned a .50 FTE Director. The positions were recombined in 2015 when a new full-time GEO Director was hired. Plans are currently in place to remove the MWP from the organizational chart, as all staff and responsibilities associated with the MWP have been absorbed by the GEO.³⁰

The MWP was created in 1987 by faculty members to implement and oversee the writing-intensive requirement, and to place students in appropriate first-year writing courses (remedial, supplemental, regular, and honors) by administering a five-hour “readiness” writing placement exam. The MWP later became involved with the articulation of writing-intensive courses in the UH System. In the 1990s, office staff began to assess and evaluate the writing-intensive program to determine whether the new writing-intensive course requirements and the placement exam were effective and beneficial to students. The office also generated materials to help faculty teach writing-intensive courses.

The history of the MWP is worth noting because the program and its long-time Director strongly influenced the development and growth of UHM General Education. After the new curriculum was adopted, plans for implementation fell through the cracks. The MWP Director, who had been heavily involved in the reform efforts, returned from a sabbatical in 2000 to find that there were no General Education classes for students to take, and no structure in place to administer the new requirements. The MWP ultimately took responsibility for implementing the new requirements; since the office successfully administered the Writing-Intensive courses, the “WI model” was used to develop and maintain the new General Education requirements. Faculty Boards were created to review courses applying for Foundations and Focus designations. An MWP staff member went through the paper Catalog and selected courses to carry the Diversification designation based on course descriptions.³¹

Currently, the role of the GEO Director is administrative and operational in nature. During the semester in which this self study was undertaken, a search was underway for a new Director. The position description that was agreed upon by the OVCAA and SEC focused on running an office instead of engaging in work related to the General Education curriculum.³² As the role is currently defined, the Director does not create curriculum policies, rather collaborates with the GEC to devise and develop procedures for implementing General Education curriculum policies.³³ It is essential for the Director to have a collegial relationship with the GEC as they work closely to make joint decisions about policy implementation.³⁴

The Director is also responsible for the oversight of the GEO, its staff, and budget so that the General Education Program has the logistical support it needs to be implemented on the UHM campus. The [*2016 UHM Organizational Chart*](#) provides the following functional statement for the GEO:

²⁹ Memorandum by Martin Rayner, Chair, Manoa Faculty Senate Executive Committee, "Consolidation and Transfer of General Education Office/Manoa Writing Program Budget and Positions," July 26, 2010.

³⁰ "Notes from 10/03/17 Consultation with Ronald Cambra, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education" (October 3, 2017).

³¹ Lisa Fujikawa, "A Brief History of the Manoa Writing Program and the General Education Office for the General Education Review Steering Committee" (September 2017).

³² "Position Announcement: Director of General Education" (2017).

³³ "Memo of Agreement among the Manoa Faculty Senate (SEC); University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature; And UHM Chancellor" (October 30, 2001).

³⁴ "Notes from 10/23/17 Consultation with the Senate Executive Committee: David Duffy, Brian Powell, Stacey Roberts, Christine Sorensen-Irvine, Doug Vincent (via Phone), George Wilkens, (John Kinder Present in the Room)" (October 23, 2017).

work with the GEC to implement General Education policies and procedures; provide staff support to GEC and Boards; develop, support and maintain a website for the General Education Program and the GEC; distribute, collect, and process documents necessary for the implementation of the general education requirements; maintain an accurate listing of general education requirements and courses for the Mānoa Catalog and Schedule of Classes; assist in the assessment of the General Education Program.

After consulting with the GEO staff, it is clear that they generally exceed expectations in carrying out these primary functions. The functional statement lists the administrative duties of the GEO, but is in no way a comprehensive description of what this work entails. It also does not capture the complexity of having to provide support and stability to a system that is transitory in nature. Faculty appointees, who are charged with creating General Education policies, are constantly rotating in and out of service. GEO staff are important in preserving institutional knowledge about the program and past decisions, and it is important that they collect and record information in a timely and consistent manner. Furthermore, the GEO is expected to have a practical understanding about the General Education Program and its policies in order to effectively collaborate with Board members, individual faculty, colleges, departments, students, academic advisors and other constituents at UHM.

Services

The GEO currently provides staffing for the GEC and its Diversification Subcommittee, UHM Foundations and Focus Boards, System-wide Committee on Written Communication, and System Composition Directors Group. “Staffing” refers to providing administrative support such as scheduling meetings, creating a calendar/timeline for the boards to meet registration deadlines, setting agendas, and recording decisions. GEO staff members also advise GEC and Board members about policy and administrative and/or logistical matters so they can make informed decisions. The GEO maintains the [GenEd Handbook](#) to provide Board members with “training materials” and plans and conducts an orientation for GEC and Board members on an annual basis.

Over the past five years, the GEO processed an average of 529 Foundations and Focus proposals per year. Processing includes managing the intake of proposals and checking to ensure applications are complete, distributing proposals to the appropriate Boards, collecting proposals once decisions are made, communicating with faculty/departments about designation approvals, logging decisions into a database, and contacting the UHM Scheduling and Catalog Offices about such decisions. Office staff follow up with individuals and/or departments if incomplete applications are submitted. In addition, the GEO processes an average of 42 Transfer Equivalency Course (TCE) requests and 352 UHM-1 and UHM-2 Forms per year.

The Academic Coordinator and secretary work closely with the Scheduling Office to ensure that accurate information is provided to students, faculty, and staff about the General Education program and troubleshoots issues concerning omissions or errors in Focus designations on [Class Availability](#). This work is rife with problems because departments are in charge of notifying the Scheduler which courses will be offered each semester while the GEO is responsible for providing a comprehensive list of courses with current General Education designations. This is done by hand and is not automated. There are also courses offered through Outreach College, which has its own scheduling

process; Outreach College works directly with departments and does not always communicate with the GEO to confirm which designations are in effect.³⁵

Proposal Processing

In the survey about UHM General Education administered in October 2017, 60.5% of faculty respondents agreed that the process to complete a course proposal is clear. 66.02% of faculty agreed they knew where to find the deadlines for proposing/renewing a General Education course. This indicates that there is room for improvement in communicating proposal process and deadline information to faculty. Numerous comments from faculty expressed a need for an online proposal system with an automated feature that enables the GEO to communicate with faculty and departments well in advance of deadlines. In addition, 47% of GEC members and 34.29% of Board members reported that the workload required of them was too much. An online proposal system could be helpful in streamlining the workload.³⁶

Focus Proposals

Because Focus offerings vary by semester, proposals for Focus designations are submitted the semester prior to the academic term in which a course will be taught (new) or the semester prior to the academic term the approval expires (renewals). There are three types of Focus proposal forms:

1. "Course-based" forms are completed by departments that wish to designate all sections of a course;
2. "Instructor-based" forms are completed by individual faculty members that wish to designate the section(s) they will be teaching;
3. "Staff-based" forms are completed by departments who do not currently know who will be teaching the section but the course has traditionally been offered with a Focus designation. These types of requests are only granted a one-semester approval period.

Proposals requesting three or four Focus designations are first reviewed by the Boards and then forwarded to the GEC for final review and approval. New Focus requests are given a three-year approval and renewal Focus requests are given a five-year approval.

Although each Focus Board has its own system for reviewing proposals, the E, HAP, and O Focus Boards utilize Google Sheets and the Laulima course management system for organizational and recording purposes. The GEO logs each proposal in the appropriate Google Sheet and scans and uploads the proposal into Laulima for review. Board members are expected to review proposals and post their comments in Laulima. The E, HAP, and O Boards routinely meet face-to-face throughout the semester to discuss proposals and vote on whether to approve the designations, engage in "negotiation" with faculty so that proposals are revised, or deny the designations. The use of Google Sheets allows the office to track proposals and provide an accounting of Board votes.

The Writing Intensive (W) proposals are reviewed by the Academic Coordinator and then distributed to Board members for review. Individual faculty Board members review their assigned proposals and negotiate with faculty proposers or course coordinators when necessary. Board members return proposals with recommendations for approval or denial and may discuss issues that are encountered

³⁵ "October 4 and 11, 2017 - Gen Ed Office Consultation (Kari Ambrozich with GEO Staff Lisa Fujikawa, Vicky, Keough, and Wendi Vincent)" (October 2017).

³⁶ UHM General Education Review Steering Committee, 2017-2018, "General Education Faculty Survey Results" (unpublished raw data, November 3, 2017).

during the negotiation process at face-to-face meetings. Since the W Board does not currently vote on any proposals, they do not utilize Google Sheets like the other Boards. Laulima is also not utilized because of the volume of proposals received. In AY 2016-2017, 311 W Focus proposals were submitted, compared to a combined total of 159 E, O, and HAP Focus proposals.

Foundations Proposals

Foundations course offerings are static, and departments are required to submit proposal forms one year in advance of the effective term so that courses can be listed in the Catalog. Unlike Focus requests, Foundations designations are granted to specific courses and departments - not individual faculty - and the expectation is that all sections will be taught in adherence to the Foundations Hallmarks no matter who is teaching the course. Foundations proposal submissions are date-stamped by the GEO and logged onto the Foundations Board's Google Sheet and scanned and uploaded into Laulima. Like the E, HAP, and O Focus Boards, the Foundations Board reviews proposals ahead of their face-to-face meetings and discusses the proposals before finalizing their votes. The Board Chair and/or Vice Chair(s) follow up with a department if clarification or revision is needed. After final decisions are rendered, the GEO sends an approval memo to the department. This semester, departments were also emailed in an attempt to expedite communication regarding course approvals. Foundations courses receive a three-year approval period for a new proposal and a five-year approval period for a renewal. The Foundations Board also reviews TCE request forms.

Diversification Proposals

Diversification requests are submitted via a UHM-1 or UHM-2 Form and a syllabus, rather than a proposal form. Once a course is approved to carry a Diversification designation, there is no renewal process. All UHM Forms are logged in a paper file when they are first received at GEO. Forms that need to be reviewed by the Diversification Subcommittee are also logged on a Google Sheet and then scanned and uploaded to Laulima for review. Once the Subcommittee has made a decision, it is recorded on the corresponding UHM Forms. These forms are reviewed by the GEO staff before being forwarded to the OVCAA for final approval.

Efficiency

Currently, there is no data that tracks how long the proposal review process takes, so it is difficult to measure the efficiency of the process. More data will be available in the future as the Assistant Director has built in mechanisms on the Google Sheets to monitor how long it takes for a proposal to route through the system. However, in examining the number of proposals that were submitted in relation to the number that were approved, a total of 2,642 Foundations and Focus proposals were submitted over the past five years. 2,321, or 87.9%, of those proposals were approved, which can be construed as evidence that the review process is efficient in designating courses.

Consistency

Some faculty survey respondents raised concerns about the submission process – most notably that the system is too bureaucratic and rigid. Consistent proposal review is important to ensure continuity in the General Education curriculum. Students rely on courses to be designated for academic planning purposes and faculty rely on student enrollments to teach. Consistent delivery of meaningful General Education courses requires purposeful review by the GEC and its Boards. Because Hallmarks cannot be changed without going through an amendment process via the GEC and MFS, the Boards have a static and consistent set of guidelines to work with. Boards are able to revise the “Explanatory Notes” that accompany the Hallmarks in an attempt to provide more lucidity in both the proposal writing and review processes. Although the Hallmarks and Explanatory Notes are meant to provide structure to

the review process, there is variance in how Boards interpret the Hallmarks and determine whether proposers meet the requirements.³⁷

Since Boards change membership each year, with approximately one-third of the members rotating off on an annual basis, it is important to have a GEO staff member at each Board meeting to act as a consultant and provide context for decision making. GEO staff often provide historical perspective and can clarify policies and procedures so Boards can make informed decisions. In addition, Boards can reference the annual reports that are generated at the end of each academic year to gain insight into how Hallmarks were interpreted and applied, and how the Boards resolved any issues encountered in the review process. Finally, Boards should utilize their GEC liaisons to discuss and communicate any issues back to the GEC.

While annual reports were not consistently available for the last five years, a review of the reports from the 2016-2017 academic year indicate that Boards sometimes faced difficulty in the review process. For instance, the E Board report indicated that online courses are difficult to assess, particularly in how courses spend “8 hours of class time discussing contemporary ethical issues.” The E Board also asked for clarification on establishing a timeframe when considering whether the course is “Contemporary.” The W Board report identified the complexity in assessing group work that involves writing and ensuring that each student is meeting the required minimum word count. The Board was also unable to resolve the issue of using Graduate/Teaching Assistants to provide feedback to students in courses that enrolled more than 20 students. It is unclear whether incoming Boards are utilizing the annual reports to make progress on issues or if the issues remain unresolved.

In surveying faculty members who have served on the GEC and/or the Boards, over 80% of the respondents agreed that their roles and responsibilities were clear. 90.63% of GEC members and 86.57% of Board members agreed they understood the value of each General Education area within the larger General Education curriculum. 78.78% of GEC members and 82.35% of Board members agreed that support from the GEO was essential to successfully carrying out their work. However, only 67.74% of GEC members and 70.59% of Faculty Board members agreed that the course review process ensures that approved General Education courses meet the General Education Hallmarks.

It is particularly concerning that roughly one-third of GEC and Board members did not agree that the review process ensures that approved courses meet the intended Hallmarks. This requires further analysis and meaningful discussion. Some of the free responses on the faculty survey addressed the low-level of expertise of some Boards, with the E Focus Board being mentioned in particular. On a positive note, it appears that most of the GEC and Board members understood their roles and responsibilities and had a positive experience. The GEO was viewed favorably by GEC and Board members, with the majority of respondents agreeing their work is essential. In addition, most members agreed they understood the value of the General Education program and its areas.³⁸

Communication Efforts

The GEO sends a “call for proposals” email to all departments and Focus course instructors each semester to solicit new and renewal proposal requests for course designations for the following

³⁷ UHM General Education Review Steering Committee, 2017-2018, "General Education Faculty Survey Results" (unpublished raw data, November 3, 2017).

³⁸ UHM General Education Review Steering Committee, 2017-2018, "General Education Faculty Survey Results" (unpublished raw data, November 3, 2017).

semester. The deadlines for these applications are communicated to departments and are listed on the General Education website as well as on the proposal forms. Departments and faculty members can check the status of specific courses via the "[Focus Status List](#)" to confirm when their approvals will expire. The GEO no longer sends individual reminders to departments and faculty members regarding course designation expiration and renewal information as it is too labor intensive and time consuming for current staff. The GEO maintains the General Education website, which provides information about the General Education curriculum, Foundations and Focus proposal forms, articulation and transfer policies, and other faculty resources. Currently, information on the value and purpose of General Education is challenging to locate. The website provides a description of the program on the "[About General Education](#)" page. Information also exists in the [Catalog](#). By contrast, the General Education *requirements* were easily located in both of the previously mentioned locations as well as in UHM Program Sheets and Four-Year Plans, and the STAR registration system.

The GEO is working to strengthen its outreach on campus to more clearly articulate the value and purpose of the curriculum. The GEO created new brochures for the Admissions Office to include in acceptance packets beginning Fall 2018. These new materials outline the General Education requirements and provide a short narrative about the purpose of General Education including the UHM ILOs. In Summer 2017, the GEO participated for the first time in the New Student Orientation (NSO) program to increase the visibility of General Education and inform students about the program. The GEO also participated in the first annual Welina Mānoa event and will participate in the "Mānoa Experience" event to increase visibility and campus outreach. The GEO has conducted "house calls" to departments to increase awareness of General Education and answer questions. GEO staff members assist in writing reports, executive summaries and memos, and conduct local and national presentations about General Education and assessment.

Beyond GEO efforts, the General Education Program could be more intentional in its mission and further branding work could serve the program well. Is "General Education" at UHM merely a set of requirements all students take? What do faculty members hope students will gain from the curriculum? Do students and faculty inherently understand the nature, purpose, and value of the program? In the October 2017 survey, 83.73% of all faculty responded that they agree the value of the General Education curriculum is clear and this number increases to 87.9% when looking at how "instructional faculty" responded. However, only 47.66% of students surveyed agreed that the *value* of General Education is clear and 62.79% of students agreed the *purpose* of the General Education Program was clear. This gap suggests there is a need for faculty to better communicate value and purpose to students.³⁹

Current accreditation criteria was shared at the May 2017 WASC workshop on *Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees* (MQID), which requires institutions to "articulate the values of our degrees via their meaning, their quality, and their integrity." One of the criteria institutions will be evaluated on is whether "the institution's student learning outcomes and standards of performance are developed by faculty and widely shared by faculty, students, staff, and (where appropriate) external stakeholders." General Education seems to be the perfect platform to deliver these ideals.⁴⁰

Resources

³⁹ UHM General Education Review Steering Committee, 2017-2018, "General Education Student Survey Results" (unpublished raw data, November 16, 2017).

⁴⁰ David Chase, "Meaning, Quality, & Integrity of Degrees" (lecture, May 2017).

Although the GEO reports to the OVCAA, its office is located in Bilger Hall rather than Hawai'i Hall. During consultation with the GEO staff, they indicated the space was adequate to meet current operational demands. The office provides enough space to hold regular board meetings, but other spaces must be utilized on the UHM campus to host workshops, orientation programs, and GEC meetings. The GEO's budget is authorized by the OVCAA and covers the salaries of the Director and office staff as well as the operating budget for the office. Currently, the GEO is staffed by a faculty Director that is appointed by the OVCAA (position vacant in Fall 2017), an Assistant Director who also serves as the "Assessment Coordinator," an "Academic Coordinator," and an office secretary. The GEO currently employs three undergraduate student workers who each work 10 hours per week and one graduate student who works 18-20 hours per week. The GEO forfeited one clerical position in Fiscal Year 2017 since no attempt was made to fill the position after a former staff member retired. GEO staff members acknowledged there are some administrative duties the GEO can no longer provide since losing the second clerical position. The GEO does not have time to follow up with departments who have a "staff-designated" course to obtain a current syllabus from the faculty member who was ultimately assigned to teach the course. They can no longer check the *Class Availability* website for over-enrollment in Focus courses that require an attendance cap. As previously indicated, the GEO stopped notifying departments and individual faculty when a designated course is up for renewal. Furthermore, it was noted that the secretary and Academic Coordinator heavily rely on the undergraduate workers they employ. While their current students are "fantastic," student employees have a high turnover rate which requires additional time to train new workers and less time to do other duties. Student workers are responsible for inputting proposal information in the Google Sheets and Access database; uploading proposals into LauLima; drafting emails to confirm Focus designation approvals; processing TCEs and UHM Forms after approval; filing proposal hard copies; and general clerical duties.

In 2014, the former Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs prepared for the incoming GEO Director *Challenges that Face the General Education Program*, an overview of issues facing General Education and the GEO. One item included in this document was to create a "paperfree workplace" via an online proposal system.⁴¹ This initiative has not yet been implemented but the GEO, under the leadership of the Assistant Director, is in process of developing the system. There is a concern that there may be insufficient funds to continue paying for the graduate student who is helping to support the online proposal system development. Moving forward, it seems necessary to hire an Information Technology (IT) specialist who can assist with the creation and maintenance of an online system and be utilized in other ways, including: developing an automated system that can notify faculty and departments of when their General Education designations are up for renewal; updating the General Education website; updating the current database used by the GEO; digitizing records; and addressing other IT issues that arise as the GEO seeks to modernize operations.

During consultation with the GEO staff, all staff members indicated they were consistently working more than 40 hours per week. The GEO recognizes that if this review leads to changes in the curriculum, there will be a need for more resources to support implementation efforts. The GEO has already faced workload issues with the amount of time that has been put into implementing the new FQ requirement and this program review process.⁴² It is also important to note the GEO has been without a Director since June 2017 but this has not disrupted operations in any way; in fact, the office

⁴¹ "Challenges That Face the General Education Program" (2014).

⁴² "October 4 and 11, 2017 - Gen Ed Office Consultation (Kari Ambrozich with GEO Staff Lisa Fujikawa, Vicky, Keough, and Wendi Vincent)" (October 2017).

has made gains in advancing ongoing improvement initiatives. The GEO staff provides consistency to General Education and has the knowledge and expertise to keep efforts moving.

GOVERNANCE

Under the 1999 proposal to modify the UHM General Education curriculum, the GEC – an MFS committee – was designated as the responsible party for overseeing the General Education Program. The committee was charged with developing policies and procedures for implementing and monitoring the General Education Program, as well as undertaking regular assessment of its educational effectiveness. Faculty Boards for the Foundations, Diversification, and Focus requirements were to be created by the GEC and supported by the GEO. Modeled after the MWP’s Writing-Intensive Boards, the General Education Boards were expected to be composed of “appropriate” faculty from diverse backgrounds who would develop and oversee the requirements by reviewing course proposals and fostering curriculum development through workshops and colloquia.⁴³ This faculty governance model was approved by the MFS on December 6, 2000.⁴⁴ In response to faculty in-fighting, an MOU was drafted in 2003 to outline how the SEC, GEC, and Boards could work together. The GEO was not included in this MOU. Like the “Faculty Governance” document, the MOU outlined general principles rather than providing a practical structure for these groups to effectively work together. Most notably, there is no language to help these groups resolve conflict when tensions arise, and no built-in system of accountability.⁴⁵

The governing documents for UHM General Education state that the GEC is responsible for creating General Education policies and assessing the General Education Program. Prior policies and procedures have made it difficult for the GEC to engage in meaningful discussions regarding policy and assessment because their workload has been focused on the course approval process. In Fall 2017, the GEC approved a series of motions to delegate course approval authority to the relevant Boards so that the GEC would no longer be inundated with reviewing proposals previously approved by the Boards. This will enable the GEC to devote more time to discussing broader General Education issues. At a minimum, the GEC should be actively involved in determining how assessment results are funneled back into the program to improve teaching and learning.

Governance Review

To preface the review of the General Education Program as a whole, the GEC formed a subcommittee to examine the governance structure in Spring 2017. The Governance Subcommittee set out to do the following: 1) identify areas of ambiguity in the governing documents and make recommendations to clarify the organizational structure; and 2) clearly articulate composition requirements and responsibilities of the GEC and its Boards, as well as their relationship with the MFS. A major finding of the Subcommittee was that the GEC is a permanent, rather than standing, committee of the MFS. As such, the GEC should not be held to the same practices and procedures that are outlined for standing committees in the MFS bylaws. This was a major point of contention between the SEC and GEC in the 2016-2017 academic year.

The Governance Subcommittee concluded its review in June 2017, and recommended the following notable actions to the Steering Committee:

⁴³ "The Proposal for Modification of UH Manoa General Education Requirements Appendix B" (December 8, 1999).

⁴⁴ "Faculty Governance of University of Hawaii at Manoa General Education" (December 6, 2000).

⁴⁵ "Memo of Understanding regarding Relationships among the Manoa Faculty Senate/Senate Executive Committee, the General Education Committee, and the General Education Boards" (April 3, 2003).

1. Update the official governing documents to: a) reflect current practices; b) revise the descriptions of GEC and Board personnel and duties; and c) reconcile inconsistencies and conflicts within and between prior governing documents. Most notably, the GEC is referred to as a permanent committee in some documents, and a standing committee in other documents. To help mitigate future problems, the documents must be revised to consistently reflect that the GEC is not a standing committee, and to clearly articulate its roles, responsibilities, and controls from the MFS;
2. Determine whether the GEC should continue to be an MFS committee or whether it should seek a more autonomous structure. The Governance Subcommittee was split in its views regarding this issue, and deferred this question to the Steering Committee to resolve after the program review was completed;
3. Address existing language within the MFS bylaws to help resolve conflicts between GEC and MFS documents, particularly if the GEC remains an MFS committee;
4. Update the MOU to establish a balance of responsibilities so that no one party can unilaterally overrule another; and
5. Establish a Diversification Board responsible for reviewing designation requests and determining how to build assessment into the process.

Unresolved Issues

The Governance Subcommittee was unable to address a critical issue relating to GEC and Board appointments. Under the current process, faculty who want to volunteer to serve on the GEC and its Boards must be recommended by the Committee on Faculty Service (CFS), an MFS standing committee, and ultimately approved by the SEC. In the past, the GEO has played a prominent role in finding volunteers, but the process changed with every new SEC Chair.⁴⁶ This current system is further challenging because the constantly-revolving CFS and SEC do not understand the constituencies that need to be met, and contend that the GEC and Boards should be filled according to rules pertaining to MFS standing committees. As an example, for the past two years, the SEC has insisted that the GEC should be composed primarily of senators since it is an MFS committee, even though the GEC's governing documents only require the Chair and Vice Chair to be senators. In some instances, senators who did not want to serve on the GEC were assigned to the committee. The current process also caused delays in appointment confirmations for the last two years. Because the GEO works most closely with the GEC and its Boards, former Directors and current GEO staff believe it is appropriate for the GEO to be involved in the appointment process, in part so the GEC and its Boards are not held up in their ability to work as soon as the Fall semester begins.

While the Governance Subcommittee was unable to resolve this issue, it shared the following observations and recommendations with the Steering Committee:

The GEC is a Permanent Committee of the MFS, and consequently should not be bound to the same appointment rules that are in place for Standing Committees. However, the SEC has not recognized the GEC's status as a Permanent Committee and continues to hold the GEC to the Standing Committee rules. Optimal procedures for GEC and Faculty Board appointments should be negotiated and established and should include the GEO as an integral, if not leading, party in the process. In order for the GEC and its Boards to operate effectively, it is necessary for them to be staffed by faculty who are supportive of undergraduate education and can provide the expertise necessary to make informed decisions. Appointments also need to be made in a timely

⁴⁶ "Notes from 10/10/17 Consultation with Todd Sammons, Former GEO Director" (October 10, 2017).

manner so that the work of the GEC and Boards can commence as soon as the Fall semester begins. The current appointment structure does not support these needs.

In addition, the Governance Subcommittee noted that further work was necessary to more clearly establish and/or reconcile the roles, responsibilities, organizational placement, and governance and operational relationships of the GEO. This is an important task, but it is also necessary to more clearly define the role of the GEO Director. Under the current structure, the GEC Chair holds more authority than the GEO Director to make decisions regarding General Education policies and procedures. However, the GEC Chair serves in the position for one year before rotating off and is not held accountable for problems that arise in General Education – the GEO Director is.

The Governance Subcommittee briefly discussed whether current representation requirements for the GEC make sense. Because Subcommittee members were not looking to remove the GEC from MFS oversight, they concluded it was reasonable for the Chair and Vice Chair to be senators so that the GEC could have a voice at MFS meetings. However, under the current structure, the GEC Chair and Vice Chair serve two-year terms to parallel MFS terms of service. It is often difficult to find a first-year senator who is willing to serve as GEC Vice Chair and commit to serving a second year as GEC Chair. The Subcommittee also did not address whether GEC members should have previously served on a Board. New GEC and Board members face a steep learning curve, and it is arguably unsound for GEC members to be tasked with creating program policies when they have no background in General Education. Prior experience on a Board can help GEC members make more informed decisions and ensure that they have a firm grounding in the General Education Program before they participate in policy creation.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

The impacts of implementing the UHM General Education curriculum in 2001 were, in certain cases, profound. The Steering Committee anticipates that making changes to the current curriculum will also create significant impacts, particularly because a wider range of programs participate in General Education than in the past.

In the faculty survey, respondents were allowed to comment on the impacts that “change” would have on their programs. Because the type of change was not specified in the survey, the responses were wide-ranging. In general, concerns were expressed over adding to or subtracting from the current curriculum. These concerns were based, in the case of additions, on added time-to-degree and/or ability to complete the major efficiently or, in the case of subtractions, on the reduced number of students that would be attracted to courses. And, while perhaps not precisely addressing the question, a number of faculty also used this question to address the impact of change on the student learning experience, either advocating for greater flexibility in the academic program (i.e., by reducing the number of specific requirements) or against various components of the current program.

In addition to focusing on strengthening the quality and integrity of UHM General Education, the GEC should be mindful of the following:

1. Departmental, program, and course enrollments. Many programs at UHM depend on the number of students that General Education designations can draw to their courses. Courses that fulfill General Education requirements are often used by smaller programs as a means of making their programs viable in light of institutional pressure for higher enrollments. And, in

⁴⁷ "General Education Committee (GEC) Governance Subcommittee Report" (June 2017).

the case of more established programs, these courses can substantiate the funding of Graduate Assistants, hence facilitating graduate programs in their disciplines. Changing the curricular requirements of General Education will have an impact on all programs regardless of size or popularity, although programs that are most highly leveraged in General Education for the purposes of sustaining their programs will be most severely impacted.

2. Time to Degree. Time-to-degree varies across UHM majors with a mean of 4.69 years.⁴⁸ UHM uses Program Sheets and the STAR Guided Pathways System, which were first implemented ca. 2013 to help expedite time-to-degree.⁴⁹ The access students have to carefully planning coursework each semester has a meaningful and positive impact upon successful major pathway trajectory.⁵⁰ In terms of General Education, bottlenecks due to course availability issues are not inherently a result of the current General Education curriculum design. However, a specific major may choose to require a course which can then negatively impact a prospective or enrolled student if not available across the UH System, or if a student changes majors within UHM. In these cases, General Education may be a contributing factor toward the issue delaying time-to-graduation.

Programs differ in the number of General Education-designated courses they offer, leading to a differing impact on students based on their program of choice. The impact is particularly acute for students within programs with high credit requirements or that are rigidly structured. To provide a sense of range, Political Science requires the completion of 30 credits for its B.A., which is fairly typical of courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Business. Biology, by contrast, requires 82-85 total credits for its B.S. This disparity between programs, combined with a current low interest in Humanities degrees (which corresponds to a higher leveraging of these programs in General Education), will inevitably result in the cleaving of faculty opinion along disciplinary lines as to whether General Education can expand its requirements.

The issue of General Education and time-to-degree is crucial because our sense as an institution of how much “wobble room” there is to add more coursework to the General Education program without hindering graduation rates will directly affect whether we are willing to add additional requirements to the program. If we determine that adding new requirements is undesirable for this reason, we will have to engage in likely contentious discussions of what requirements we are willing to diminish/remove in order to make space for new requirements.

3. Transfer and Articulation. UHM has had a tendency to “lead” on issues related to General Education innovation, yielding both positive and negative consequences. In the mid-1990’s, an initiative within UH System was undertaken to explore how General Education could be innovated at UHM, UH Hilo, and the CCs with an eye on finely tuning articulation for students wishing to transfer within the UH system. This initiative was, however, ignored by UHM, which began its own reform efforts. More recently, in response to requests from WASC, UHM adopted the Foundations requirement in Quantitative Reasoning (FQ). While considerable

⁴⁸ Manoa Institutional Research Office, "Undergraduate Time-to-Degree Brief" (2017).

⁴⁹ "Notes from 10/03/17 Consultation with Ronald Cambra, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education" (October 3, 2017).

⁵⁰ Dhanfu Elston, "Complete College America Hawaii Advisors at the Center of Completion Momentum" (lecture, 2017).

outreach efforts were made to work with the System for articulation purposes in this instance, other UH campuses have followed UHM's lead.

The upshot of all of this is, while "going it alone" is an undesirable path for curricular change at UHM, it is probably also inevitable that the rest of the campuses will adapt as best they can if curricular changes are made. UHM should not be hindered from seeking creative goals in the interest of improving student learning, although communication between UHM and other campuses within UH System is greatly appreciated and should be encouraged.⁵¹

Recommendations

What follows is a list of recommendations based solely on our internal review of General Education at UH Mānoa. These are not meant to be prescriptive. Rather, we have tried to highlight areas that can be strengthened and present an opportunity for improvement.

CURRICULUM

1. Issue/concern: Greater coherence is needed within the General Education curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The GEC should pursue curricular reform that includes:

- a. *Understanding the curricular needs of students:*
 - i. Examine the curriculum through the lenses referenced on pages 9-10: 1) curriculum framing; 2) coherence within the curriculum; 3) content and quantity; 4) effectiveness of pedagogy; 5) equity and articulation; and 6) institutional support. These lenses should be utilized in the immediate reform work recommended and as part of long-term, iterative evaluation efforts.
 - ii. Utilize the results from the student and faculty surveys administered in Fall 2017 to gain insight into the needs and wants of Mānoa students and faculty.
 - iii. Solicit more feedback from students and faculty, as well as other stakeholders (e.g., alumni, employers) on their experiences with General Education, and on the skills and knowledge General Education should instill in a Mānoa student.
 - iv. Work with the UH Mānoa Institutional Learning Objectives (ILO) Implementation Committee to consolidate the ILOs and General Education Learning Objectives into one set of Undergraduate Learning Objectives that are responsive to the curricular needs of the students.
- b. *Increasing connection-building opportunities within the General Education curriculum through:*
 - i. First-year seminar courses that explicitly incorporate critical thinking and information literacy skills development, as well as introduce skills that are part of the General Education curriculum at the 300 and 400 levels (i.e., oral communication, ethical deliberation);
 - ii. The solidification and standardization of FW course content to firmly reinforce foundational composition and information literacy skills;

⁵¹ "Notes from Consultation with Jennifer Brown, Manoa Transfer Coordination Center (Chair), Kaieie, Council of Academic Advisors (Chair AY 17-18) 09/28/2017 Steering Committee Meeting" (September 28, 2017).

- iii. 200-level writing courses that introduce students to writing within their broad disciplines (e.g., social science, natural science, etc.). These courses should carry a Writing Intensive Focus designation and reinforce FW skills;
 - iv. An integrated Foundations and Diversification experience centered on a theme in an effort to develop optional thematic General Education pathways;
 - v. Cross-departmental “mixers” to encourage faculty to collaborate on developing cross-disciplinary pathways and new courses centered around big questions/ideas;
 - vi. Encouraging departments to scaffold discipline-based writing, oral communication, ethics, and information literacy skills via a progression of courses in each major to foster student learning and growth; and
 - vii. Department/major senior-year capstone experiences that integrate critical thinking skills and information literacy with advanced discipline-specific skills.
- c. *Addressing the uniqueness of a UHM education and reinforcing UHM as a Hawaiian place of learning:*
- i. Consider strengthening sense of place within the General Education curriculum by including a Foundations requirement relating to Hawaiian history and culture.
- d. *Clarifying the intent, and increasing the consistent application, of Hawaiian/Second Language as a campus-wide requirement.*
- i. Clearly articulate the intended learning objectives of studying a second language and how it can relate to major study. Ensure that HSL is clearly viewed as part of General Education and under the purview of the GEC.
- e. *Simplifying the curriculum proposal process:*
- i. Form a subcommittee that is responsible for examining whether it makes sense to continue instructor-based designations. The GEO Academic Coordinator and Secretary should be included in this subcommittee.
 - 1) Consult the Faculty Boards and ask for their insights into the merits and weaknesses of instructor-based and course-based proposals.
 - 2) Procure data that shows which courses with Focus designations tend to be instructor-based versus course-based.
 - 3) Use survey results and/or focus groups and meetings with Chairs/Deans, as appropriate, to ascertain the reason for instructor-based preferences.
 - ii. If a course-based model is ultimately adopted, create a policy to require training and periodic retraining of Focus instructors. This will ensure that all Focus instructors remain familiar with Focus Hallmarks and learning objectives, rather than just the course coordinators who write and submit proposals on behalf of the department.
- f. *Creating mechanisms for consistent proposal review:*
- i. Take a more active role in developing and offering training for new GEC and Board members.
 - ii. Work with Board members to develop rubrics for use in the review process so that Hallmarks can be consistently interpreted and applied by Boards with constantly rotating membership.
 - iii. Utilize GEC liaisons, Advisory Group meetings, and annual reports to identify whether any Boards are experiencing challenges in interpreting the Hallmarks. Provide guidance to these Boards to resolve issues.

EMPHASIZING AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

While the GEC should be in charge of reform efforts, it should work with the SEC to form a task force so that there is broader representation in pursuit of making informed decisions. This is critical

if the GEC chooses to work toward completely overhauling the existing curriculum. It is important to be inclusive in this process and ensure that decision-making is guided by evidence and in the interest of bettering the student experience.

2. Issue/concern: Assessment data/results are not being effectively used to improve General Education programming and teaching practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The GEC must develop a congruent and cohesive assessment plan in collaboration with subject matter experts (e.g., UHM Assessment Office), and in consultation with the GEO and OVCAA, particularly the Program Officer serving as the WASC accreditation liaison. What questions need to be examined? Does data currently exist or does it need to be collected? How will data be used to improve the program and who is responsible for implementing the findings? Initiating a 5-year review cycle for General Education was a tremendous step forward for the General Education Program. A systematic assessment plan now needs to be developed to ensure that advancement occurs within each 5-year cycle to obtain data to examine and improve programming. The review plan should include the following:

- a. Clearly articulated and measurable learning objectives that can be mapped across the UHM four-year student experience, taking into account the substantial percentage of transfer students. General Education learning objectives were developed for Foundations and Focus designations in AY 2017-2018 but will need to be effectively communicated to faculty and revised over time;
- b. Improvements in the way quantitative data is collected on General Education designations, including the development of consistent assignments that can be assessed;
- c. Mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of General Education via the collection of direct and indirect evidence of student learning;
- d. Plans for how data will be used to make improvements to the General Education Program as well as for re-accreditation purposes. Consider working with the Committee on Educational Effectiveness (CEE) and/or commissioning faculty groups to work on specific use-of-results initiatives so that faculty development is ongoing; and
- e. A routine audit conducted by the GEC with assistance from the GEO to ensure there are enough seats for students in each of the Focus areas, and to determine whether students can access these courses. If departments are not providing sufficient opportunities for students, the GEC should consult with department chairs on how to address deficiencies.

SUGGESTED TIME FRAME

The GEC should aim to reach an agreement with the Assessment Office, GEO, and OVCAA by the end of Fall 2018. Data collection and use of results will be an iterative process.

3. Issue/concern: Large numbers of students who transfer to UHM find it difficult to fulfill some of the General Education requirements in a timely fashion. This is due to articulation and equivalency issues, as well as peculiarities within the General Education Hallmarks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Collaborate with the UHM Office of Admissions and UH System groups (e.g., Academic Advising and Transfer Network, University Council on Articulation) to create more equitable policies and pathways for transfer students. This would include addressing the issue of course equivalencies and articulation within the UH System and from non-UH System community colleges and 4-year institutions.

- b. Address the most restrictive aspects of FG and Diversification Hallmarks that recur as problems for transfer equivalency.
- c. Improve communication flow between the GEC, GEO, Office of Admissions, advisors, and transfer students.
 - i. Clarify how and where transfer students can appeal their General Education equivalency requests or have their General Education completions repaired in STAR.

GOVERNANCE

1. Issue/concern: There is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities between parties directly involved in the General Education Program (i.e., GEC, GEO, OVCAA, MFS-SEC). This lack of clarity further extends to the GEO Director and the GEC Chair and their responsibilities related to the General Education Program and curriculum.

2. Issue/concern: The rotating model of leadership used within the GEC does not create a structure that can successfully support sustainable progress. Additionally, the current committee composition requirements make it possible for members to possess limited or no experience with UHM General Education and/or best practices in General Education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Every opportunity must be granted to clarify functional relationships before a new governance organizational structure is pursued. Because efforts should be concentrated on improving the curriculum and quality of the student experience over the course of the next 5 years, it is not recommended that a new governance structure be pursued at this time. However, it is recommended that the current governance structure be repaired. To do this work, the committee recommends that representatives from the GEC, GEO, SEC, and OVCAA engage in facilitated discussions to work on the following:

- a. Resolve ambiguities in the governing documents and draft a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that includes the GEO and OVCAA. The existing MOA was written while the GEO was under the College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature. It is important that the appropriate parties be represented in the MOA and that language be built in that will help parties not only be able to effectively work with each other, but provide recourse should any of the parties overstep their authority. Attention should particularly be paid to making the GEC and Board appointment process more efficient.
- b. Clearly establish and/or reconcile roles, responsibilities, and governance and operational relationships between the GEO and GEC, and the GEO Director and the GEC Chair.
 - i. In particular, the GEO Director's role and responsibilities needs to be better defined and a clear system of accountability must be built into the position. What are the expectations for the Director? How will the Director be evaluated? What is the functional relationship between the GEO Director and GEC Chair?
- c. Revise the current representation and term-of-service requirements for the GEC so there is increased continuity, stability and appropriate experience represented. Consider establishing a requirement for GEC members to have previously served on a General Education Board.
 - i. Provide the GEC, GEO, and Board members professional development opportunities to learn about best practices of General Education.
- d. Once the General Education governing documents are revised and a new MOA is drawn up, it may be necessary to amend the MFS bylaws to resolve conflicts between the revised GEC documents and MFS bylaws.

HIGH PRIORITY WORK FOR AY 2018-2019

In order for the General Education Program to prosper, the GEC, GEO, SEC, OVCAA, and CFS (for matters relating to GEC/Board appointments) must respectfully and collaboratively work together. The steering committee recommends consulting with the UHM Campus Climate Program Officer in the Chancellor's Office to find a qualified facilitator for these discussions. Having a trained and impartial facilitator will help to ensure all parties are heard and acknowledged while engaging in discussions and to help resolve conflicts if they arise during the process of decision making. The steering committee is willing to provide framing and context to the facilitator to set this work up for success.

OPERATIONS

1. Issue/concern: There is a need for increased operational efficiency, particularly in the course designation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Fall 2017, the GEO began working on developing an online proposal submission process. It is anticipated the online system will be ready to use by Spring 2019. The GEO should continue this work and use feedback from the GEC, Boards, and GEO staff to develop and refine an intentional and efficient system. We recommend the following be accounted for in developing this system:

- a. Automated communication mechanisms to alert faculty about deadlines and whether any of their courses are up for renewal;
- b. One information management system so all parties (i.e., GEO, GEC, Boards) do not have to use multiple platforms for the purposes of review, data recording, and communication;
- c. A digital workflow component to automate correspondence with proposers, the Scheduling Office, and Catalog Office once a proposal is approved, as technologically possible;
- d. Data storage so that reports can be generated to track the number and distribution of Foundations and Focus courses, as well as enable the GEC and GEO to forecast course offerings in future academic terms; and
- d. A qualified IT specialist who can assist with the creation and maintenance of the system.

2. Issue/concern: Given the transitory nature of GEC, Board, and GEO Director appointments, the GEO serves a vital function in providing stability for the General Education Program. However, clear processes are not currently in place to foster the development and preservation of institutional memory, which is lost any time there is a changeover in membership or personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important for recommendations a and b in the Governance section to be acted upon. After a more stable and clearly-defined governance structure is put in place, we recommend the following:

- a. Collaboration between the GEO, GEC, and Boards in developing training procedures for GEC, Board members, and GEO personnel in accordance with the new MOA between the GEC, GEO, SEC, and OVCAA. It is important for incoming members and personnel to have resources that will train them how to fulfill their responsibilities, as well as understand how to effectively interface with other parties within the General Education Program.
- b. Protocols must also be established regarding who is authorized to speak on behalf of General Education, which may differ depending on the context. Because of the widespread impact of General Education on campus and at the System level, this duty must clearly be defined and assigned to all parties responsible for General Education. More clarity is needed

about how much autonomy the GEO has when making decisions about the General Education Program.

- c. It is important that consistent and effective messaging regarding the value and purpose of General Education and its alignment with the university mission be developed so that members of the GEC, Boards, GEO, and OVCAA can speak about General Education with a unified voice.
- d. Foster a culture of respect and recognition for GEO staff knowledge and expertise. GEO personnel attend GEC and Board meetings to help provide continuity, answer questions from constituents across campus, and are responsible for having an in-depth working knowledge of policies and procedures and best practices of General Education. It is important for the GEC and GEO Director to consult with GEO personnel in order to make informed and consistent decisions.
- e. Create a permanent leadership structure within the GEO in line with other offices and centers nationwide (e.g., establish an Associate Director position) to promote more stability for the General Education Program. It is in the interest of the faculty director and GEO staff to have a position in the office dedicated to overseeing office operations, training staff, ensuring consistent decisions are being made within the office, and providing continuity for long-term initiatives so that goals are met.

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