

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 3, 2019

TO: Michael Bruno
Provost

Brian Powell
Chair, University of Hawai'i Mānoa Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Shannon L. Johnson
Chair, General Education Committee



SUBJECT: General Education Program Review One-Year Progress Report

Background

The General Education Committee (GEC), a permanent committee of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) Faculty Senate, sets the policies and procedures that govern implementation and assessment of General Education (Gen Ed) requirements. The General Education Office (GEO), housed administratively in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs/Provost (OVCAA), implements those requirements in accordance with the policies and procedures set by the GEC. The first comprehensive assessment of the current GenEd curriculum since its implementation in 2001 was conducted in AY 2017-18, which included detailed internal and external reviews.

This document provides a one-year progress report, and a three-year progress report will be submitted in Spring 2021. Moving forward and integrating Gen Ed into the five-year academic program review process, the next program review will be conducted in AY 2022-23. The OVCAA will work directly with the Chair of the GEC, Director of GEO, and Chair of the Program Review Steering Committee throughout the review process to ensure that all relevant parties remain fully informed. The review team will consist of both internal and external members who will be nominated by GEC and GEO and selected by the Provost. Team nominations are due Spring 2022. The self-study will be due to OVCAA in Fall 2022 and the site visit will take place in Spring 2023. The response to the external report will be followed by one- and three-year progress reports which will bridge the next review cycle.

Overview

The internal and external review reports from this inaugural program review were extensive and are being weighted equally in this five-year program review process. The numerous recommendations - large and small - were grouped into three overarching categories: assessment, curriculum, and governance. Working groups were established in Spring 2019 for each category where members of GEC and GEO could focus on reviewing the necessary

material in greater depth to develop suggested next steps, draft any related motions or documents, and bring issues back to the larger GEC meetings for inclusive discussion and voting. The plans of action for each category are discussed below.

1. Assessment

The Assessment Working Group (AWG) spent the Spring 2019 term primarily focusing on three recommendations from the Reviews (notation for recommendations refers to abbreviations used in December 2018 response memo):

S2: Develop and implement a program-wide assessment program

B2: General education as outcomes

C2: Assessment data/results are not being effectively used to improve Gen Ed programming and teaching practices

The AWG's efforts produced a detailed assessment plan that integrates all three recommendations into a document that covers a seven-year assessment cycle. A full draft of the General Education Assessment Plan was presented to the GEC for its April 26 meeting, and will be taken up for discussion on May 3. As part of the development of the assessment plan, the Foundations and HAP Boards, OVCAA, and Assessment Office were all consulted and their feedback incorporated into the document.

Several features were added to this document in response to specific recommendations in the external review report as well. One of these was the development and inclusion of a statement regarding transparency in assessment, and a policy regarding how assessment data will and will not be used. Secondly, the Gen Ed Boards are given a prominent role in the assessment cycle by determining which learning outcomes would be assessed, and how, in the multi-semester process outlined in the document. This helps to ensure that relevant expertise in each area of the curriculum would be included in the design process for each assessment initiative. Third, the assessment plan and process explicitly recognizes the possibilities inherent in assessing student learning in multiple areas of the curriculum at the same time (e.g., cultural literacy in FG and HAP; critical thinking, information literacy, and written communication skills in student products from Ethics courses). Taking advantage of such overlaps in learning outcomes allows us to assess learning more often.

The document lays out ideas meant to foster a culture of assessment focused on student learning rather than faculty performance, in an iterative five-year program review cycle that is explicitly linked to both assessment and WASC reaccreditation. Toward this end, we are seeking to publish the Assessment Plan, following GEC approval, with signatures from the GEC Chair, GEO Director, Provost, and perhaps the SEC Chair. The intention behind both these signatures and the inclusion of details regarding procedures and personnel for the next program review of Gen Ed, is to ensure that the assessment schedule, timeline for program review, and lessons learned from this first iteration of the process will not be altered or lost by the rotating membership of relevant committees and offices. Finally, it should be noted that the Assessment Plan addresses the structural problems that have to date prevented systematic and effective measurement of student learning in Gen Ed by laying out specific roles and responsibilities for all parties (GEO and its Assessment Coordinator, GEC and an Assessment Working Group or

Subcommittee, Gen Ed Boards, faculty at large, OVCAA, and Mānoa Faculty Senate). The cooperation and participation of these parties will ensure that we work together to produce evidence for data-driven policy decisions and to improve pedagogy for better student learning. The specificity with which each party's responsibilities regarding assessment are laid out also represent a partial response to recommendation G1 (There is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities between parties directly involved in Gen Ed). In the area of assessing student learning in Gen Ed, we hope that this level of detail provides a model to follow for reform efforts aimed at reexamining and improvement of operations, curriculum, and governance.

2. Curriculum

The Curriculum Working Group (CWG) spent the Spring 2019 term primarily focusing on four recommendations from the Reviews (notation for recommendations refers to abbreviations used in December 2018 response memo):

S4: Certify and approve courses, not instructors

S6: Honor UH community college transfer equivalency decisions from non-UH institutions

B1: Revisioning General Education at UHM

B3: Prototype curriculum redesign for cohesive learning

Their efforts produced several actionable items as well as excellent dialogue and preliminary ideas on ways to move forward with broader curricular enhancements.

S4: Certify and approve courses, not instructors

Focus approvals are currently granted at both the instructor and course levels. The GEC strongly supports this recommendation, and approved a motion to accomplish this change on January 11. The motion was presented to the full Mānoa Faculty Senate (MFS) on March 13, where it was tabled until three objections could be addressed.

- The first was to collect data to support the "whereas" clause indicating that instructor-based Focus designations harmed students by adding instability to the curriculum and hindering time-to-degree.
 - In response, the GEC sent a survey to all academic advisors at UHM to collect data. The survey responses are currently being collected to bring back to MFS in early fall 2019.
- Secondly, a detailed implementation plan and timeline for the transition to course-based only Focus designations was requested.
 - This will be drafted by the Curriculum Working Group before the motion is taken up by the senate again.
- Third, consultation with department Chairs was requested.
 - The GEC Chair and GEO Director are meeting with the Council of Chairs on May 7 for this purpose.

*S6: Honor UH community college transfer equivalency decisions from non-UH institutions, and
C3: Large numbers of students who transfer to UHM find it difficult to fulfill some of the Gen Ed requirements in a timely fashion*

Given that the GEC agreed that course equivalencies approved by a UH System institution should be honored by UH Mānoa, the change was incorporated into the revisions made on March 7, 2019, to EP 5.209 (Executive Policy on University of Hawaii System Student Transfer and Inter-campus Articulation) by the Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy, Deborah Halbert. The revised language relevant to this issue from that draft reads: "Upon point of entry to a UH campus, a transcript evaluation will be completed. Once transfer credits are accepted at any campus within the UH system these credits will transfer to any another campus as approved by the onboarding campus" (section IV.A.2.a). Section IV.B.5.a reads, "Completion of general education core requirements (foundations/basic and diversification/area requirements) at one UH campus before transferring will be considered upon transfer to have satisfied the general education core requirements at any UH campus. Fulfillment of the Completion of general education core requirements (foundations/basic and diversification/area requirements) at one UH campus before transferring will be considered upon transfer to have satisfied the general education core requirements at any UH campus. Fulfillment of the general education core will be verified by the campus at which the student completed the requirements." Together, these two new passages ensure that transfer equivalency decisions made at any onboarding campus in the UH System will be honored if a student transfers to another UH System institution.

Also relevant to students' abilities to transfer general education coursework is the successful efforts by UH Mānoa's campus representatives to the UH System WICHE Interstate Passport Network. UH Mānoa's General Education Committee passed our institution's Passport Block on April 14, 2019. This was submitted along with a memo requesting approval from the Provost to join the network as an institution. Planning is currently underway for implementation of the initiative with a launch date of Spring 2020. Doing so will ensure that students from non-UH institutions who transfer to UH Mānoa with an Interstate Passport will be marked as having fulfilled their lower-division general education requirements (foundations/basic and diversification/area requirements). Similarly, students who earn an Interstate Passport at UH Mānoa will be able to transfer to other passport institutions with their general education requirements fulfilled. Once all 10 UH campuses are member institutions, this will strengthen inter-campus articulation within the UH System as well.

B1: Revisioning general education at UHM, and

B3: Prototype curriculum redesign for cohesive learning

The Curriculum Working Group agreed with the External Review team's goals of providing a more cohesive learning experience for UHM students that also embeds place-based learning in the curriculum and emphasizes an integrative and diverse general education experience through clustered or thematic pathways (external report, pp. 14-15). The CWG agrees, moreover, that "the curriculum must scaffold knowledge and skills from basic to complex. 'One-and-done' experiences do not lead to deep and sustained learning development" (external

report, p. 6). Several steps were taken by the CWG in the efforts to begin addressing these recommendations.

First, the CWG discussed a range of models of thematic pathways at different institutions across the country. Thematic Pathways in General Education (TPGE) that allow for maximum flexibility for students and academic freedom for faculty are preferred. Several points of agreement to structure the TPGE proposal that will be brought to the GEC in Fall 2019 emerged from those discussions. Any TPGE approved by the GEC must be inherently multidisciplinary (not specific to any one department or college) and appeal to a broad swath of faculty and students. Proposals for TPGE must include plans, structures, and a diverse faculty committee willing and able to oversee academic events (e.g., lectures, films, service-learning opportunities, experiential learning) that are made available to students in many different participating courses; these integrative mechanisms add mutually supportive and cross-cutting skills, perspectives, and experiential learning to a theme-based curriculum centered loosely on broad interest areas such as sustainability, indigeneity, and social justice. Students who satisfy requirements via a thematic pathway may enjoy a greater sense of cohesion among their Gen Ed courses while still benefiting from a broad exposure to skills and content from across the curriculum. The CWG has developed the foundation for a proposal for TPGEs, which the GEO will continue working on over the summer of 2019 to bring back to GEC in Fall 2019.

Secondly, the CWG agrees that “one-and-done” courses are less effective than those in which learning is scaffolded and reinforced. This is particularly relevant to Oral Communication and Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Issues, each of which consist of a single course requirement. The CWG began discussions centered on proposing changes to the Gen Ed curriculum that include the addition of a Foundations Oral (FO) requirement (and, tied to this, the reduction of required Writing Intensive courses from 5 to 4, bringing UH Mānoa closer in alignment with the other UH campuses). In addition, the CWG began discussing a proposal to change Foundations Global and Multicultural Perspectives; currently, students must take one course in two different FG areas: FGA (prehistory to AD 1500), FGB (AD 1500-present), and FGC (prehistory-present). The FG hallmarks as currently adopted by the System are grounded historically in world history survey classes, though they are taught today in a number of different disciplines. We see great potential to revisit the FG hallmarks and learning outcomes with our System partners, while drawing on recent research and national attention in general education to cultural literacy, global learning, and place-based learning. Student learning in these areas may be better served by requirements that more directly address Hawaii’s special identity as an indigenous-serving institution with rich cultural diversity, a local/state-driven sense of responsibility to our island communities, and an outward-looking, progressive global outlook. The CWG will strongly encourage the GEC to consider, in its discussions in the Fall, an FG that centers on global learning and cultural literacy, coupled with an FH (Foundations Hawaii/Pacific) that introduces, at an introductory level, the unique perspectives, cultural literacy, place-based learning, and values inherent in our Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Issues (HAP) Special Graduation requirement.

Third, the CWG also agrees that second-language competency needs to be addressed, and the proposal to make a 6-credit (i.e., 102-level competency) a universal requirement that students can test out of, but not waive (external report, p. 14), be given serious consideration.

Adopting a student-centered approach focused on student learning and, as much as possible, resisting historical and political concerns about programs' perceived dependence on SSH, is crucial to maintain in ongoing discussions about possible changes to the Gen Ed curriculum. In an effort to answer the question of what every Mānoa graduate should know, do, and value, the GEC engaged in the Spring 2019 term in sustained discussions of our mission, values, and vision, including the drafting of a mission/vision/values statement for the program. This foundational sense of the value of a general education alongside the major also embraces the goal of producing well-rounded graduates with 21st-century skills, broadly interdisciplinary perspectives, creative and critical thinking, and a stronger sense of shared identity and values. The sentiments expressed in these discussions of our mission, and what the GEC and GEO imagine Gen Ed could be at Mānoa, represent a strong departure from the "requirements" or "checklist" mentality referred to in the external review report (pp. 5, 11) as a central issue to address. We are excited by the possibilities inherent in a reimagined Gen Ed program, bolstered by a comprehensive assessment plan that promises to produce the evidence needed for effective pedagogical resources and curricular adjustments in the future. We also fully recognize the need to establish a process for extensive consultations, both across campus and with our UH System partner campuses, in the pursuit of possible changes to the Gen Ed curriculum. Engaging stakeholders across the state and campus community, and making full use of available and soon-to-be-produced assessment data, will help ensure a process of curricular reform that takes time but that should result in greater buy-in throughout the process.

Finally, emerging from the CWG's deeper discussions is strong encouragement that the GEC take up the areas of teamwork, values, critical thinking, and information literacy, none of which are currently addressed in a systematic and meaningful way in our Gen Ed curriculum. Doing so does not necessarily require the addition of new Gen Ed or Special Graduation requirements, as models exist in higher education and even within the UH System for incorporating these learning areas into coursework. As an example, teamwork might be addressed through team-writing assignments in W courses, by allowing the W hallmarks to include the modalities of writing that are increasingly common in the workplace (including, not coincidentally, our own): group writing and editing on Google docs being one example. Similarly, DY (science laboratory) classes, where teamwork is relatively common, might be asked to pay more explicit pedagogical attention to the trials and tribulations of working in groups on a shared assignment or procedure. Values such as cultural literacy, global perspectives, disciplinary breadth, and indigenous epistemologies might be covered in FH courses and/or perhaps a second-language requirement. These are all conversations that ultimately must be broadened out to welcome the faculty as a whole in a variety of formats. However, with a student-centered, data-driven focus, we believe that curricular reform has the potential to reinvigorate the energies and forward-thinking nature of Gen Ed at Mānoa, creating exciting learning opportunities for students and faculty alike in the process.

3. Governance

The Governance Working Group (GWG) spent the Spring 2019 term primarily focusing on one recommendation from the Reviews (notation for recommendations refers to abbreviations used in December 2018 response memo):

G&I/A2: Confirm GEC as a permanent MFS committee

Various documents are inconsistent in the identification of GEC as a permanent committee of MFS and generally need updating to include institutional and organizational changes over the past 19 years. The majority of time this Spring was spent making significant edits to the Faculty Governance of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa General Education document. Because this document outlines the membership and responsibilities of all the Gen Ed Boards for which the GEC has oversight, establishing a much needed Diversification Board surfaced again as a priority before the Governance document could be approved by GEC and submitted to MFS. The motion to establish a Diversification Board will be presented to MFS on May 8. The revised Governance document will be discussed with GEC at the May 10 meeting in hopes of submitting it to MFS in Fall 2019.

Another key document related to this recommendation as well as recommendation G1 (There is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities between parties directly involved in Gen Ed) is a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The purpose of this new MOU is to provide guidance and clarification of the function and relationships between the Manoa Faculty Senate (via SEC), the GEC, the General Education Office (GEO), and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (OVCAA), or more broadly the higher-level faculty and administration working most closely with General Education at UH Manoa. We encourage the inclusion of a detailed set of procedures, deadlines, and roles to ensure timely staffing of the Gen Ed Boards each year. Just as a point of clarification, this MOU does not replace the 2003 MOU, which focuses on the downward relationships between the SEC, GEC and the Gen Ed Boards (we do hope to update that MOU to include the GEO). This new MOU is currently in draft form, and ideally a representative from each of the four parties (SEC, GEC, GEO, and OVCAA) will come together to reconcile any clarifications or concerns with this MOU draft as soon as possible.