

28 May 2013

TO: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: General Education Governance Task Force

RE: Recommendations on Establishment of a Standing Committee for General Education, General Education Curriculum Review and Approval, and General Education Program Governance

The General Education Governance Task Force (GEGTF) was asked to review the current operations of the General Education Council (GEC), including (a) the structure for reviewing and approving General Education curriculum, (b) recertifying existing General Education courses, and (c) overseeing General Education Program Assessment, Program Review, and Student Learning Outcomes; and to make recommendations to the Faculty Senate as to whether or not the GEC should be made a Standing Committee of the Faculty Senate, and how the responsibilities assigned to the GEC should be carried out beyond Spring 2013.

Task Force Composition

The task force was made up of three current members of the General Education Council (volunteers), three current members of the Educational Policies Committee (volunteers), two members of the Faculty Senate (appointed by the Senate Executive Committee), two members of the Senate Executive Committee (volunteers), one Associate Dean (appointed by the Faculty Senate President), and the current General Education Director (See Appendix 1 for the list of Task Force members).

Task Force Data Collection, Analysis, and Deliberation Process

Meetings: The task force met face-to-face for nine 1.5 hour meetings from 8 November 2012 to 9 May 2013. Elizabeth Adams, VP of Undergraduate Studies and Recording Secretary of GEC, was invited to speak with the GEGTF at one meeting. The first four meetings were dedicated to general discussion of the current structure for GE curriculum review and policy emplacement and development of our methodology, especially development of the survey instrument used to consult with selected stakeholder groups (see below). Two meetings were devoted to discussing the results of the survey, and in the remaining three meetings the task force developed and agreed on the recommendations contained in this report.

Survey: The GEGTF developed a survey to query select stakeholder groups in the GE curriculum review and recertification process regarding their perspectives on the current process, structure and operations related to General Education and seeking their counsel on possible alternative configurations for accomplishing the objectives of the current GEC (see Appendix 2 for the text of the survey).

Using SurveyMonkey, the survey was sent to designated individuals via campus email on Thursday 14 February 2013. A follow-up reminder was sent via email on Thursday 28 February 2013. The survey was closed on Friday 8 March 2013.

The survey was sent to approximately 130 individuals, as follows:¹

Stakeholder group	current	former
members of the GE Governance Task Force	12	N/A
members of GEC	13	7
members of EPC	11	5
department and program chairs	57	27
Associate Deans	9	7
other individuals who have attended GEC meetings	~12	

A total of 66 individuals began the survey; 61 (92%) finished. We received responses from²

Stakeholder group	current	former
members of the GE Governance Task Force	not distinguished in survey	
members of GEC	9	6
members of EPC	3	3
department and program chairs	21	3
Associate Deans	7	2
“other”	9	
did not respond to this question	10	

Thus, we had about a 50% response rate. Members of GEC and Associate Deans were particularly well-represented among the respondents.

Current General Education Council Structure and Responsibilities

The current GEC was established as a sub-committee of the Educational Policies Committee, with no requirement that any members of EPC serve on GEC. GEC members are selected through a combination of College-specific and faculty Senate elections. The GEC was established by the Faculty Senate in 2010 with authority and oversight in the following areas:

- GE COURSE/CURRICULUM REVIEW
 - Review and approve new courses for inclusion in GE
 - Review and approve course modifications to GE courses
 - Review and approve curriculum related criteria for course placement in the GE program
 - Review and approve GE pattern modifications
- GE RECERTIFICATION
 - Establish procedures for GE recertification
 - Conduct GE recertification
- GE PROGRAM
 - Review and recommend policies related to the GE program

¹ The number is approximate because some individuals appear on more than one listserv – e.g., some people are department chairs and members of EPC – but lists were not systematically culled to remove duplicates.

² As noted, some individuals have more than one role on campus; therefore, the numbers in this chart add up to more than 66 (the total number of respondents). Ten individuals did not respond to the question about their role(s) on campus; providing this information was not required in order to participate in the survey.

- Establish procedures for review of GE SLOs
- Conduct review of GE SLOs
- Oversee process of GE Program Review
- Oversee completion of GE Program Review
- Oversee process of annual assessment cycle for GE program
- Oversee completion of the annual assessment cycle for GE program

In practice, the GEC has spent that vast majority of its time in the last three years conducting GE recertification. But it is worth noting that in accordance with the convening of the GEC, an appointed GE Director has begun to develop an assessment process for GE.

In its deliberations, the GEGTF considered each of the current GEC’s responsibilities individually.

General Considerations

Based on responses to the survey and GEGTF expertise, we identified the following as the core issues to be considered in (re) conceptualizing how GE curriculum review and approval should be structured moving forward:

- There is little support among the surveyed stakeholder groups for having an independent, standing General Education Committee. According to survey responses, only current members of GEC favored establishing an independent standing committee (57% in favor; 21% opposed); non-GEC members strong opposed this structure (77% opposed; 19% in favor). Overall, only 25% of survey participants supported establishing an independent standing committee.
- There is a wide consensus that faculty responsible for GE curriculum review should be knowledgeable and experienced in the curriculum process generally and the GE program specifically. Most survey participants responded that experience on a curriculum committee at least at the college level is either desirable (33%) or very important (50%); prior service on a university-level curriculum committee was also deemed desirable (53%) or very important (28%).
- It would be desirable to establish an on-campus group that advises the campus about GE issues. They might serve as a “holistic oversight” of the GE program but would not have the authority to approve GE curriculum or GE policies.
- Establishment of a separate body for reviewing, approving, and recertifying General Education courses was not successful at eliminating the contentiousness generated by those decision-making processes. Although not the primary objective of our survey, responses to the survey suggest that this contentiousness is a function of (a) GE itself, and its various roles on campus—both curricular and administrative, (b) differing views about the role of recertification and what it should yield, and (c) the nature of the workload associated with preparing course packets for recertification.
- Curriculum review and approval should not be overly cumbersome.
- The current cycle of GE curriculum recertification is nearly completed and developing a new process to recertify the last remaining section of GE would likely be inefficient.

Recommendations

Overview: The GEGTF does not recommend that the General Education Council be made a Standing Committee of the Faculty Senate. Rather, with the exception of finishing the current cycle of GE recertification, a majority of GEGTF members recommend that all responsibility for GE curriculum review and approval, GE Program Assessment, Program Review, SLOs, and other policies should return to EPC beginning Fall 2013. The current GEC will finish up the current recertification cycle by Spring 2014; after Spring 2014, responsibility for GE Course Recertification will also return to EPC.

Specific Recommendations, Approved as Motions:

The General Education Governance Task Force recommends to the Faculty Senate that:

1. GEC should not be made a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. Approved 5-3-1 on 5/9/13.
2. Beginning Fall 2013, responsibility for reviewing and approving GE curriculum (new GE courses, modifications to GE courses, and GE pattern modifications) will return to EPC. Approved by GEGTF 8-1-2 on 4/25/13.
3. The existing GEC should finish the current recertification cycle by ~~Spring~~ the end of Fall 2014. Approved by GEGTF 10-1-0 on 4/25/13. Amended by SEC on 6/19/13.
4. After ~~Spring~~ Fall 2014, GE recertification will become the responsibility of EPC. Approved by GEGTF 8-1-2 on 4/25/13. Amended by SEC on 6/19/13.
5. Beginning Fall 2013, responsibility for reviewing and approving policies and procedures related to GE Assessment, GE Program Review, GE SLOs and other policies and practices related to General Education will return to EPC. Approved by GEGTF via email 5/6/13 7-4-0.
6. The Faculty Senate direct the GEC to prepare a report of its experiences and lessons learned over the last three years for consideration in the process of the next steps concerning the establishment of a General Education advisory council. Approved by GEGTF on 5/9/13 8-0-0.

General Education Governance Task Force Members
2012-2013

Name	From
Becker, Lawrence	EPC
Costin, Cathy (Chair)	GE Council
Hennessey, Judy	Associate Deans served 11/8/12-11/19/12
Danta, Darrick	Associate Deans served 11/19/12-2/14/13
Hosken, Dan	Associate Deans served 3/1/13-
Klein, Sharon	GE Council
Lasky, Beth	GE Director
Rivas, Mike	EPC
Schmidt-Levy, Judy	Senate Exec Comm
Schwartz, Diane	Senate Exec Comm
Smith, Wayne	GE Council
Spector, Cheryl	EPC
Swenson, Adam	Faculty Senate
Ward, Veda	Faculty Senate

General Education Council Governance

Dear Colleagues:

The General Education Governance Task Force asks for your help.

The General Education Council (GEC) was established as a subcommittee of the Educational Policies Committee (EPC) in March 2010 and was given the authority to review and approve GE curriculum, conduct GE recertification and GE program review, and recommend to EPC policies related to the GE program.

The resolution creating GEC called for a task force to be convened in 2012-13 to review the operations of the GEC, propose policy regarding the structure of the council, and determine whether or not the GEC should become a standing committee of the Faculty Senate.

As members of the General Education Governance Task Force, we are asking for your help in reviewing the operations of GEC in the past two years and for your input into the decision about the future of GEC and the GE curriculum review process.

We appreciate your taking the time to complete this survey of GE faculty stakeholders.

Please respond to the questions as an individual, not as a representative of a department, college, committee, or other entity.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

General Education Council Governance

1. Are you now or have you been (please check all that apply to you)

	current	AY 2011-12	AY 2010-11
a member of GEC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a member of EPC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a department chair with curriculum reviewed by GEC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
an Associate Dean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other (please indicate below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

if you responded "other," tell us how you participated in GE curriculum review

2. Have you ever (please check all that apply)

- prepared a GE recertification portfolio?
- prepared a new course proposal for review by GEC?
- prepared a course modification proposal for review by GEC?
- prepared a program modification proposal for review by GEC?
- prepared a GE pattern modification for review by GEC?
- interacted in some other way with GEC?

How else have you interacted with GEC?

General Education Council Governance

3. Which committee do you think should be responsible for each of the following tasks, which are currently the responsibility of the GEC?

	EPC	a subcommittee of EPC (analogous to the current GEC)	an independent GE committee	either an independent committee or a subcommittee of EPC (that is, not EPC itself)	other (please describe below)	no opinion
Review and approve new courses for inclusion in GE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review and approve course modifications to GE courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review and approve curriculum related criteria for course placement in the GE program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establish policies related to the GE program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establish procedures for GE recertification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct GE recertification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establish procedures for the review of GE SLOs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct review of GE SLOs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oversee developing the process for GE Program Review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oversee completion of GE Program Review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oversee developing the process of the annual assessment cycle for the GE program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oversee completion of the annual assessment cycle for the GE program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

please explain "other" responses here



4. How strongly do you feel that

	Strongly opposed	Somewhat opposed	Neutral	Somewhat in favor	Strongly in favor
GEC should be an independent standing committee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GEC should remain a subcommittee of EPC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review of GE curriculum and the other responsibilities of the GEC should return to EPC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The current tasks of GEC should be divided up among several entities (please elaborate below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

please explain how you would prefer the current responsibilities of the GEC be allocated

5. Assuming that GEC continues to exist as either an independent committee or a subcommittee of EPC, how important is it that the individual members of GEC have the following experience(s)?

	not important	desireable but not critical	very important
has served on a curriculum committee at the department level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has served on a curriculum committee at the college level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has served on a curriculum committee at the university level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has personally developed a proposal for new GE curriculum or prepared a GE recertification portfolio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
regularly teaches GE courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has served on a University level committee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has participated in some sort of interdepartmental collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What other experiences or characteristics should members of the GEC have?

6. Assuming the GEC continues to exist as either an independent committee or a subcommittee of EPC, how important is it that ...

	not important	desireable but not critical	very important
all colleges have the same number of representatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
each college has at least one representative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
colleges are represented in rough proportion to their overall size (in FTES)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
colleges are represented in rough proportion to how much GE they teach (in FTES)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
there is a student representative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
there is at least one lecturer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
there are limits to the total number of representatives from any one college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What other things should be considered when determining what the committee membership will be?

7. How should members of the committee or subcommittee be selected? Please rank.

all members elected by the faculty senate

a mix of senate-elected and presidential-appointed members (analogous to EPC)

all members elected by the faculty of the individual college (analogous to PP&R)

all members elected by the faculty on a university-wide basis

a mix of college-elected, senate-elected, and presidential-appointed members (analogous to the current selection process)

none of the above (go to item #8)

8. Please describe any additional or alternative suggestions you have for the selection process for members of GEC.

9. From your perspective, what do you think are the strengths of the current General Education curriculum review process?

10. From your perspective, what do you think are the weaknesses of the current General Education curriculum review process?

11. Please provide any additional comments you have about the General Education curriculum review process.

Again, thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. If you would be willing to meet with a member of the GEC Governance Task Force (either in a focus group with other members of the faculty or one-on-one with a member of the Task Force), please email the Task Force Chair, Cathy Costin, at cathy.costin@csun.edu.