



General Education Council (GEC)
Special Meeting
May 1, 2019
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
HS1002

Voting Members Present:

Matt Laposata (Biology - Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal)
Joy Brookshire (Biology - Molecular and Cellular)
Huggins Msimanga (Chemistry)
Chao Mei (College of Computing and Software Engineering)
Meredith Ginn (Communication)
Jeanne Bohannon (Composition)
Natalie Berry (Dance)
Tim Mathews (Economics)
Nirmal Trivedi (First-Year and Transition Studies: First-Year Seminar or Learning Communities)
Brad Suther (Geography)
Mia Oberlton (Health Promotion and Physical Education (Coordinator for WELL 1000))
Ryan Ronnenberg (History)
Lynn Stallings (Honors College)
Trina Queen (Interdisciplinary Studies)
JoAnn LoVerde-Dropp (Literature)
Bruce Thomas (Mathematics)
Susan Rouse (Philosophy)
Prabha Padukka (Physics)
Jen Willard for Corinne McNamara (Psychology)
Nancy Burney (Statistics)
Margaret Baldwin Pendergrass (Theatre and Performance Studies)

Non-voting Members Present:

Kris DuRocher (Academic Affairs)
Amy Jones (Academic Affairs)

Guest(s):

Chien-pin Li (College of Humanities and Social Sciences)
Carmen Skaggs (College of Humanities and Social Sciences)

The meeting began at 3:30 p.m.

- I. Old Business
 - a. Approval of past minutes

- The April 17, 2019 meeting was cancelled. Minutes from the March 20, 2019 meeting are pending approval at the next regular GEC meeting in August 2019.

II. New Business (Kris DuRocher)

a. Professional Development Survey Results (Handout)

- The GEC was asked to provide feedback on professional development topics to be considered for AY20. In Question 1, from preliminary survey three themes emerged: 1) Ensuring Quality Education in GenEd Courses; 2) Understanding Assessment; and 3) Theory and Research.

b. Institutional Requirements Update

- UPCC and Faculty Senate voted on the removal of the institutional requirements of WELL 1000 and KSU 1101, recommended as effective fall 2020.
- The policy is removed, not the offering of the courses.
- The courses will be counted in program electives or if added to the program of study.

c. USG General Education Council Update (Handout)

- In November 2018, the USG General Education Council recommended a revision of the core curriculum (handout pages 1-3).
- The recommendation was presented and supported by RACA in February 2019 (handout pages 4-7).
- The recommendation was then presented at RACEA on April 25, 2019.
- The recommendations focused on these current concerns:
 - Inconsistency in offerings from the grandfathering of institutional courses
 - Communication about Areas A-E to students and the public
 - Checklist model approach and disconnect from the majors
 - Common course numbering system prescribed but not followed
 - USG approval process needs revision of scope
 - Learning outcomes at the institutional level
 - Flexibility of institutions to focus on missions
 - Scope and timeline are not yet clear
 - Summer workgroup will be put into place
 - There should be a better sense in the fall.
 - Implications for KSU:
 - Recommendation to hold on the Student Learning Outcomes
 - Need to balance changes that can help students with the understanding that the core may be shifted.
 - This year's work was a necessary foundation to understanding KSU's General Education.

d. Assessment

- Per Danielle Buehrer, the GEC will hold on a university-wide assessment for two years. However, individual departments can continue to do assessments individually.

e. Clarification on General Education and Core Curriculum

- What is General Education?

- The foundation of skills, knowledge, and values that prepare students for success in their majors and in their personal and professional lives after graduation.
- General Education outcomes should be encouraged throughout the undergraduate experience.
- What is Core Curriculum?
 - A part of the General Education program currently in Areas A-E.
 - Where skills and ideas are introduced.
- f. Looking Forward . . . Faculty Director of GenEd's Summer Agenda
 - Complete the annual General Education report
 - Develop professional development opportunities
 - Continue General Education curriculum support
 - Complete Faculty Senate annual report
 - Create a General Education Council handbook
 - Continue to develop a strategic plan for General Education

III. Other Discussion

- a. Syllabus template or syllabus language? See Curriculum Resources page. Keep using the old language on the General Education page. However, this can be a future discussion.

IV. Upcoming Events/Announcements

- a. The next meeting of the General Education Council will be the retreat on Thursday, August 15, 2019 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. in Prillaman Hall, Room 1101.

The meeting ended at 4:38 p.m.

kd/ar/djh

Attachments:

2018-2019 GEC Feedback Survey

Handouts – Professional Development and USG proposed changes

Re-envisioning the Core Curriculum in the University System of Georgia
A Proposal by the USG General Education Council
November 15, 2018

Introduction

The University System of Georgia's (USG) General Education Council (the Council) has recently engaged in significant discussions about the possible need to re-envision the USG's policy about the core curriculum. As outlined below, The Council recommends that this re-envisioning process be undertaken at this time.

The Purpose of the Core Curriculum

College graduates face a world changing at warp speed. Their capacity to contribute, succeed, lead and build a satisfying life in this rapidly changing environment depends, in significant part, upon their college experience. That experience, a combination of academic coursework, student life and other factors, should produce graduates who are well-rounded individuals with the capability to continually adapt over the course of a lifetime.

The core curriculum at any college or university is the linchpin in a college experience providing students with the knowledge and tools necessary to adaptability. The core curriculum should provide a both a base level of knowledge and a firm foundation in critical methodologies that will allow graduates to analyze and solve problems yet unknown. The core curriculum must enable these students to become competent and satisfied members of society.

In order to accomplish this goal, the core curriculum must provide a breadth and depth of knowledge going beyond what is provided by the high school curriculum. It must be value added. The core curriculum must provide knowledge in essential areas; the ability to read and comprehend complex texts, write and communicate orally in an effective manner, critically analyze complex data, and use strategic methodologies and technology to solve problems.

The Purpose of a Common Core Curriculum

As a group of institutions of higher education formed to carry out a common mission, the University System of Georgia (USG) faces a unique challenge with respect to the core curriculum. The core curriculum of each institution must meet the above broad goals. However, the core curriculum policy of the USG must concurrently assure that students may transfer seamlessly to sister institutions with minimal loss of course credit. This means, as a practical matter, that the core curriculum of each institution must not only provide native students with a core which prepares them to succeed in life. It must provide that same opportunity to transfer students.

Why is it essential to allow transfer without credit loss? For many students, completion of an entire degree program at one institution is optimal. Yet, for many other students, transfer is necessary for financial reasons, for adjustment to college life, or for adjustment to changing

career goals. Accordingly, the common core curriculum of the USG must be designed both to assure transfer with minimal loss of credit and, concurrently, to assure that graduates have the well-rounded education to assure that they have the capacity to adapt.

Does the Current USG Common Core Curriculum Achieve These Goals?

The current common core curriculum policy has some strengths. For example, the policy does result in transfer without significant loss of credit in many cases. It does distribute required courses over several broad areas to assure that some breadth of knowledge is gained. Also, many administrators have over time acquired a working knowledge of the core curriculum policy so that some degree of consistency in application of the policy is assured. Further, the policy does provide a framework which has assisted USG institutions in meeting the requirements of the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation.

Despite these positive factors, the policy has developed over time to become more of a checklist of requirements and less of a compelling menu of course choices encouraging exploration and intellectual growth. Similarly, the checklist has become more and more rigid, often impeding efforts of individual institutions to implement creative approaches to both achieve their unique institutional missions while promoting transfer without loss of credit. In addition, this “checking the boxes” approach to completion of the core has become complex and confusing. The requirements of the policy are expressed by “area” requirements (e.g., Area A) which do not clearly communicate to students and their parents why each “area” is important and compelling. This, of course, encourages simply checking off each area as completed rather than promoting understanding about the reasons for studying math, science, history and literature. Furthermore, the area approach makes it difficult for individually accredited institutions to conceptualize their own coherent rationale for their general education curriculum.

In addition to this overall rigidity, the current common core curriculum policy is fraught with other problems of a more technical nature:

- Grandfathering. At the time of the transition to the current common core curriculum policy, a choice was made to allow institutions to continue to include courses contained in their old core without the need to establish that those courses met the requirements of the new policy. This pragmatic choice certainly made the transition less cumbersome at the beginning. However, it has over time resulted in common core which is simply not coherent. For example, a course presented today for inclusion in an area of the core by one institution might well be denied because it does not meet the current requirements of that area, while that same course might well be included in the core of another institution simply because it was grandfathered.
- Institutional level outcomes for each area. The learning outcomes for each area are established by the individual institution (i.e., those area outcomes are not established at the system level). This means that any given course might meet the learning outcomes for a particular area at one institution, while not meeting the learning outcomes for that same area at another institution. This creates internal incoherence because the transfer

institution must accept that course for that area even though it may not meet the learning outcomes for that area.

- Common course numbering/naming/descriptions. The policy requires use of these common numbers/names/descriptions. Nonetheless, exceptions are in fact the rule. These many exceptions make it difficult for transfer institutions to administer the policy and make it hard for the students to understand what is required and why.
- Lack of consistency in review of proposals for inclusion of course in core by Regents Academic Advisory Committees. These RACs are the experts in each discipline. Their input about course proposals is essential. These RACs are typically hardworking, dedicated groups. However, the criticality of their role in the process of approval of courses for inclusion in the core has never been widely understood by the RACs. Further, the process for communication between the Council on General Education and the individual RACs has never been clearly understood. This often results in the Council on General Education making decisions about course proposals with insufficient input from the disciplinary experts.

On balance, it is time for a fundamental revision of the policy.

Is it the Right Time to Re-envision USG Core Curriculum Policy and Process?

This is a difficult time to consider a fundamental revision of the core curriculum policy. Resources are limited and all USG institutions are facing numerous time sensitive and critical deadlines. There is, frankly, a collective sense of initiative fatigue. This is not, however, sufficient reason for not taking action which is in the best interests of students.

A core curriculum which is understandable and flexible should promote higher rates of retention and graduation. Accordingly, it is time to change the policy in a manner which better promotes student success.

A Proposed Process and Timeline to Implement a New Core Curriculum Policy and Process

The implementation of a new core curriculum policy will be time consuming for USG institutions, the USG and the Council on General Education. In addition, a new policy will have a significant impact on teaching assignments at USG institutions. These two factors --- time and teaching loads --- will inevitably cause the new policy to be controversial. Accordingly, it is recommended that a significant period for input and feedback be provided. Further, upon adoption of a proposed core curriculum policy, a significant period for adoption of a new core at each institution (perhaps 2 academic years) should be established.

Conclusion

Despite the time and effort which will be required, the Council believes that update of the core curriculum policy is in the best interest of students. We recommend that this effort be undertaken.

Re-Envisioning the Core Curriculum in the University System of Georgia

Presentation on behalf of the
General Education Council

to

Regents Academic Committee on Effectiveness and Accreditation

April 25, 2019 9:45 to 10:30 am

Purpose of Today's Presentation

- Provide RACEA with a status report concerning the work of the General Education Council concerning re-envisioning the core curriculum in the USG
- The General Education Council recommended* to RACAA that RACAA support a process of re-envisioning the core curriculum in the USG.
 - See attached 11/15/2018 recommendation
 - Presented to RACAA on 02/21/2019
 - The need to re-envision the core curriculum and to adopt a process to accomplish that goal was endorsed by RACAA on 2/21/2019
 - *All action taken by the USG General Education Council is advisory to the USG's Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer
- The General Education Council has **not yet recommended a specific structure** for a re-envisioned core curriculum. Why?
 - Before nuts and bolts are addressed, the question is whether the case to re-envision the core is strong enough to convince you that we should all roll up our sleeves, put on our body armor and take on the task of developing a structure which meets the needs of our state.
- The General Education Council stands ready, if asked, to play a key role in the effort to re-envision the core. However, the process must individuals and groups beyond the General Education Council if it is to be successful. The process and timeline to carry out the re-envisioning will be established by the USG.

What prevents us from achieving our general education goals – consider:

- Grandfathering
- Communication
 - What does Area A, B, C ... mean to the typical high school graduate or parent of that graduate?
 - Do we inspire students by how we describe this important step in their education?
- Checklist approach: Do we provide room for students to explore? Needed flexibility provided?
- A Common course name/number/description system which isn't Really common, that is
 - See attached example
- Current process for system-wide review of proposals for changes to the core
- Learning outcomes for areas established at institutional level

Questions for your consideration:

- What goals should the design of the core seek to attain? What are the attributes you want graduates to have?
- Is the core curriculum now achieving those goals?
- If the core curriculum is not achieving those goals, do we have the will to put in the hard work necessary to change?
- What are the **guiding principles of an ideal structure** for the USG core -- consider:
 - USG institutions are given flexibility to tailor the core to their mission?
 - Student acquire base knowledge required to succeed in their chosen area of focus?
 - Students have room to explore?
 - Attainment of required outcomes based on attainment of outcomes not completion of courses?
 - Promotes higher retention and graduation rates?
 - Complete transferability within USG?
 - Meet requirements of accrediting bodies and law?

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