

General Education Committee Comments on GE Change Proposal

Comments on “version 5” of the GE Change proposal.

The GE change proposal should address the following points of opposition in addition to the ones already listed in the Possible Opposition section.

- 1) The authority of the GE Comm or group will be weakened by merging back into the Curriculum Committee. This is because the Gen Ed Comm has administrative representation on its committee with classified staff support and significantly, minutes. Having minutes ensures a formal record of decisions made and rationale. With the formalized structure of a General Education Committee comes greater assurance of the quality of the Gen Ed approvals and accountability for those decisions. [No, I don't think this is just a "protecting our turf" stance. This comes from a passion for quality in BC's Gen Ed program.]
- 2) The change will not speed up the GE approval process because even if the GE Comm is merged back into Curric Comm, there will still be a sub-group of Curriculum Comm working on Gen Ed approvals just as there are other expertise sub-groups of Curriculum Committee (e.g., SLO group) making approvals for other parts of the CoR's. While there wouldn't need to be another formalized level of curriculum approval in CurricuNET if the GE Comm is merged, we have been operating without that formal approval in CurricuNET for several months now anyway because the system is unable to work with our usual approval process. The 10-minute training I did for Curriculum back in November does not count as adequate training of the rest of the Curriculum Committee in GE reviews. Eventually, we do want to get to the place where all of the Curriculum Comm has the training to do GE reviews (including CSU/IGETC), we don't think the Curriculum Comm is there yet and with the huge load of approvals Curriculum Comm is doing in Fall 2010/Spring 2011, the training is not going to happen this academic year.
- 3) Whether Gen Ed is a separate sub-committee (like Dist Ed) or is a sub-group of Curriculum Comm, many areas of the CoR will HAVE to be looked at; not just the SLO area or the Gen Ed category area (which just lists the category letter a course is applying for). Curriculum Comm has NOT looked at topical outlines and out-of-class assignments to see if the course should be Gen Ed. To review a course for Gen Ed, one MUST look at the SLO area, the Gen Ed category area, the Topical Outline area and either the Out of Class Assignments or the Attached Files areas to see the evidence for critical thinking.
- 4) The Gen Ed review process is admittedly labor intensive because so many areas of the CoR must be looked at and written rationale must be created to explain disapprovals. The review process would be the SAME if Gen Ed Comm is done away with as a separate entity or if it remains as a separate entity. The Gen Ed change proposal would not change what has to be done for the Gen Ed review process.

Other criticisms of the Gen Ed Comm review process not given in the GE Change Proposal are addressed at the end of this critique.

With regard to the fifth paragraph of the proposal discussing the apparent differences between BC GE and CSU/IGETC:

The criteria for Gen Ed courses developed by the Gen Ed Committee in the last two or three years are congruent with, very similar to, compatible with criteria listed in the "Guiding Notes for General Education Course Reviewers" from the CSU/UC systems published January 2010 and the 2010 IGETC Standards, Policies & Procedures manual revised in July 2010. It was expected that as courses approved for GE years ago went through the normal curriculum review process with Gen Ed Comm criteria, the courses might be shifted from one BC category or sub-category to another and that that would also place them in areas more compatible with the corresponding IGETC/CSU areas. **We are unaware of any courses that have been reviewed under the Gen Ed criteria and were placed in BC areas incompatible with IGETC/CSU.** There may be older courses in our Gen Ed package that may be placed in areas that are different from IGETC/CSU but that is because they haven't been reviewed under the Gen Ed criteria yet. If there are specific examples of that, we would appreciate looking at those courses to clear up any miscommunications.

The fourth sentence of the fifth paragraph (version 5 of the GE proposal dated 08 February 2011) does not make sense: "If we approve courses that are already approved and credited for CSU breadth or IGETC, these practices essentially direct students away from classes that would be valuable to them for transfer." If a course is approved for BC GE and for CSU Breadth/IGETC, how would that direct students away from that course? If anything, it would make that course gold for the students!

The fourth sentence of the fifth paragraph *of the proposal given to Senate* is misleading: "In some cases we have not approved courses that are already approved and credited for CSU breadth or IGETC." (This sentence was deleted from the version given to the Gen Ed Comm).

The last sentence of that paragraph also assumes that we (BC Gen Ed Comm) have disapproved courses that were approved by CSU/IGETC *under their revised criteria*. The sentence reads "While it is true that some students will never transfer, there needs to be a strong rationale for not approving as General Education what our 4-year counterparts collectively recognize as a valuable means of gaining GE and a holistic analysis of the courses approved for GE credit." We need specific examples of this claim. There are courses approved by CSU GE Breadth and IGETC *long ago* that would not meet the CSU/IGETC revised criteria today but are permanently grandfathered in.

With regard to the sixth paragraph:

The sixth sentence of the sixth paragraph is not true: "Typically the GE committee has determined local GE and the local graduation requirements but without considering CSU or IGETC GE". The GE Committee has made approvals for submitting courses to CSU Breadth/IGETC approval. Yes, we have relied on the faculty discipline experts to determine if they should ask for the CSU/IGETC approval but we do not recall any course submitted for CSU/IGETC years ago not being put forward again to CSU/UC for their GE approval. Again, specific examples are needed.

Response to the “fairness” criticism of the Gen Ed Committee’s review process

“To be fair GE Committee needs reps from several areas and the only committee with across the board representation is Curriculum....The GE approval process is very unfair due to the limited representation of the GE Committee.” *Assumption:* The GE review process is biased and unfair and the review process in Curriculum Committee is less biased and more fair.

1. The Gen Ed Comm has had representation from several areas and it has certainly been open to having reps from all areas serve on it. Current areas represented include: for Category A: English; for Category B: physical science, biological science (but need to get a replacement for Rich Wise) + philosophy; for Category D: foreign language and social sciences (we've always had two from social sciences); for Category E: health/PE. Yes, we need reps for Category C areas but it is not for lack of trying. Last academic year we also had a counselor on the committee.
2. Because of the huge curriculum load, not all members of Curriculum Comm are looking at all of the areas of the CoR. We have sub-groups looking at specific areas. Each sub-group does NOT have broad representation either. We are relying on each sub-group to do their part of the curriculum review on behalf of the entire Curriculum Comm. In fact, those sub-groups that are the only ones authorized to look at and comment on certain areas of the CoR (e.g., the SLO group). Your proposal does not solve the problem of limited representation.
3. To be fair, ALL members of Curriculum Comm should be looking at ALL areas of the CoR. The Curriculum Comm has not been operating in a fair manner either with all of the sub-groups BUT I accept the limitations we're operating under. For practical reasons with the HUGE load of courses the Curriculum Comm has had to review, the Curriculum Comm has had to go this unfair route with limited representation per sub-group of Curriculum Comm to do the reviews.
4. At the past couple of Curriculum Committee meetings there were less than 20 people attending and some of them were administration. In conversation with the previous Curriculum Chair, Susan McQuerrey, this was typical of the face-to-face meetings under her tenure. She noted that 15 was a good turnout. Furthermore, because of the huge load of courses to review in Curriculum Comm, the course reviews were sub-divided so that teams of Curriculum Comm members were looking at sub-sets of the entire course review list. Not all Curriculum Committee members were reviewing all of the CoRs. Was that a fair process? No, but for practical reasons Curriculum Committee needed to do that.