

# Proposal for Change – BC Academic Senate

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## Background –General Education and current changes in California higher education

General Education courses are those courses credited to students as the core of their broad and liberal education that should result in a well-rounded higher education background and an educated citizenry and voting population. In California Community colleges there are 3 types of General Education coursework:

- CSU Breadth = courses credited and required by CSUs for General Education
- IGETC = Intersegmental GE transfer courses accepted by both CSU and UC
- Local GE = a general education program of courses defined by the local individual community college and credited locally for graduation towards an AA degree.

Community colleges have typically assigned additional graduation requirements such as information competency, health, multicultural coursework, student development, etc.

California Community Colleges are facing pressure to review, renew, and re-evaluate their General Education practices, particularly local GE and graduation requirements. There is vast political pressure to eliminate local graduation requirements and to line up local General Education coursework with CSU and UC in order to assure that our students can transfer coursework and/or use it for further educational opportunities. In addition SB 1440, developing statewide model degrees allows the use of only CSU Breadth or IGETC as the General Education core and DOES NOT allow additional local graduation requirements.

The majority of BC's graduating students in 2009-2010 used the following GE for their degrees:

BC Gen Ed—718

CSU Gen Ed –247

IGETC Gen Ed—50

Thus the majority of BCs students fulfill BC General Education courses and complete the additional graduation requirements. Some, but not all of these BC GE courses are accepted for transfer. Some, but not all, of these courses are placed in different areas than the IGETC or CSU changes the number of units or courses in a particular discipline or field. In some cases we have not approved 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. We have created a pattern ascribed to by our students which is valuable for an AA but not equally as valuable to continue that education. 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.

## Issue or Rationale for Addressing the Issue – Approval of General Education Coursework and Alignment with Statewide Curricular Changes

Our General Education Committee is a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee. The current process and committee structure was developed for a different time and to meet different needs. Historical documentation is not available. There is no formal appointment of the co-chairs although the senate approves the committee members. The “Decision Making Document” describes the committee as a subcommittee of and reporting only to the Curriculum Committee. Typically the GE committee has

determined local GE and the local graduation requirements but without considering CSU or IGETC GE. The committees have traditionally met separately approved different aspects of the curriculum and not communicated well about the goals, criteria and meaning of integrated GE coursework. (GE committee determined coursework credit; curriculum committee determined units for requirements thereby separately effecting graduation requirement without coordination). This year has been different due to implementation of CurricUNET. The committees have met together, done training for all curriculum members on GE requirements, criteria and BC GE SLOs. But the GE committee has had difficulty keeping up with the curriculum reviews and communicating their decisions to the Curriculum Committee.

The GE committee has done commendable work creating GE SLOs consistent with the accreditation standards. Currently it is essential that curriculum work is integrated across the institution with clear processes and cohesive missions and goals. With the current load of courses (over 300 in the last 6 months), we have had difficulty communicating the GE committee as a separate approval process and getting final decisions in a timely manner.

Proposed Solution - Reconstruct the current GE committee members as a permanent part of the Curriculum Committee, without a separate approval process and continue integrated training and review for local GE, CSU breadth and IGETC (and other graduation requirements).

1. Currently a course is approved separately for Title 5 compliance, mission, programs etc. by the curriculum committee, for Distance education delivery by the Extended Learning Committee, for local GE credit by the GE Committee and for SLOs by the Assessment Committee. Coordinating all these committees for nearly every piece of curriculum is difficult and lacks integration. (We have dealt with over 300 pieces of curriculum since August 2010). This must be simplified.
2. Curriculum committee members need to understand the important role of GE across the institution, with regard to articulation and transfer and as it may apply to areas such as CTE (career technical education courses often never considered by the GE committee) and local degrees. Because the curriculum committee sees all courses, not just those submitted for GE, they have a greater understanding of the role of ALL courses and the impact on students integrating the effort focusing on student pathways.
3. The curriculum committee is provided regular training and updating on the “big” curriculum picture, including the impact of GE approval and the impact of additional graduation requirements. Ongoing, statewide professional development is essential.
4. The curriculum committee members are already reviewing ALL courses. The proposed change would integrate review of GE credit or articulation, increasing efficiency.
5. The proposed change would allow for classes submitted without the originator understanding the need for GE credit to be identified by a single committee, increasing integrated, institution-wide coordination and alignment of GE.
6. The current electronic queue for CurricUNET is very complicated at BC. (No other college has all these subcommittees in the approval of a piece of curriculum.) Subsuming this committee into the everyday work of the curriculum committee simplifies the queue reducing problems that currently exist in the electronic process.

Working as a single committee, doing all curriculum approval improves, our efficiency, reduces work, reduces confusing information going to the curriculum originators, keeps every on the same

page during this volatile period of change for curriculum and degrees, and makes the approval process more consistent and efficient.

### Possible Opposition

The General Education committee has done an outstanding job creating and communicating the SLOs for the GE program and may want to retain ownership of the interpretation of their work. Response: The GE committee members will remain integrated within the curriculum committee restructuring, and will be able to retain ownership of their work.

Some people may feel it is BC's right and responsibility to identify their own recipe for GE regardless of CSU and UC expectations. Response: GE requirements will still be managed at BC through the curriculum committee.

Some local requirements are crafted to address particular needs of community college students. Response: the curriculum committee will continue to manage local requirements.

There was discussion about the GE committee doing GE SLO assessment, a role the curriculum committee does not have time to do. Response: it is recommended that another committee be assigned to that job as a subcommittee of the Assessment committee.

### Conclusion

1. Staying current-We live in a changing time with regards to degrees, general education and curriculum, and we must strategize a way to assess and implement changes consistent with the advice of our statewide faculty senate and state chancellor's office.
2. Staying efficient - We are currently looking at massive change encumbered by the implementation of a new electronic curriculum approval process in CurricUNET. We need to create a logical and efficient way to do the work that also works in the electronic queue process.
3. Reducing repetition and mixed messages - Curriculum is already fully reviewed by the curriculum committee; having small portions of it reviewed through a separate process is inefficient and unsustainable.
4. Maintaining professional training - We should have a fully trained curriculum committee capable of an institution-wide and statewide assessment of the components of curriculum.
5. Focusing on students -We hurt students when we limit their choices or redirect them to courses that do not transfer or fail to coordinate their pathways to the best of our ability

We need to subsume the work of the current GE committee into the existing Curriculum Committee, inviting all existing GE members to join an Integrated Curriculum Committee.