

Charge for General Education Review Committee (Gen Ed Com)

UCR Academic Senate

November 2018

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The General Education Review Committee (Gen Ed Com) will convene 14-16 UCR Senate faculty members from across all Colleges and Schools that administer undergraduate degree majors, including at least two Lecturers with Potential Security of Employment or Lecturers with Security of Employment (LPSOE's/LSOE's), a current or former Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), and one additional current member or former Chair of CEP. The Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE), Associate Vice Chancellor of Equity and Inclusion, and Faculty Director of University Honors will serve as voting *ex-officio* members. The Gen Ed Com will develop a process and method to substantially engage undergraduate and graduate students, Academic Advisors, and other campus constituencies in the fulfillment of its charge. The overall committee composition (17-19 members) should reflect UCR's intellectual and demographic diversity, the distribution of undergraduate student majors across disciplines/schools/colleges, and (if possible) a background of scholarly engagement in curricular and pedagogical matters that are relevant to a review of general education.

The central purpose of the Committee is to provide a thoughtful, well-contextualized framework and plan (including recommendations) for re-examining, revising, and/or transforming UCR's general education requirements. This work should be guided by 1) a clear, nuanced, and rigorous pedagogical mission statement about the relevance and importance of a general education curriculum at a diversely populated, growing public research university and 2) broad, substantive, and thoughtful conversations with (undergraduate and graduate) students, faculty, Academic Advisors, administrators, and other groups/communities deemed relevant by the Gen Ed Com.

The Gen Ed Com should note that sibling UC campuses have utilized their versions of CEP to conceive and administer learning outcomes assessments for general education. Thus, the Gen Ed Com will not necessarily need to take responsibility for this part of the review. The review of learning outcomes by CEP in the undergraduate program review process is an integral part of the review process. However, the Senate (in dialog with the administration) will need to determine the appropriate mechanism for the assessment of learning outcomes.

The Gen Ed Com might initially be guided by several working questions:

**How can a UCR undergraduate education cultivate students' lifetime commitment to active, critical engagement for the betterment of the surrounding world?**

**What forms of scholarly/worldly literacy, critical thought, intellectual competency, and humanistic/scientific/artistic knowledge are we obligated to nurture and facilitate among our undergraduate students, across disciplines and majors?**

**How can UCR's general education curriculum enhance and enrich (rather than burden or encumber) the existing major/minor curricula, such that students are provided every possible opportunity to inform their specific BA/BS training with**

**vital perspectives from other scholarly fields? (For example, how can coursework in the natural sciences inform and expand the horizons of students majoring in the humanities, and vice versa?)**

**Are there broad areas of knowledge and pedagogy that should guide UCR's conceptualization of the general education curriculum?**

**How can an innovative, creative, and forward-thinking transformation of UCR's general education best prepare undergraduate students for their next phases of intellectual, social, and professional growth?**

**What are the best methods and venues through which to engage the UCR campus (undergraduate and graduate students, faculty colleagues, staff, administrators) and extra-campus communities on this review/revision/transformation of the general education mission and curriculum?**

**What is the most feasible implementation plan for the committee's recommendations, given campus staff, faculty, and administrative capacities?**

UCR has not completed a full review of its general education curriculum *for about 40 years*. The Gen Ed Com must conduct a rigorous critical examination of the existing general education curriculum to contextualize its vision and plan for revision/transformation. A revamped general education curriculum should engage the pedagogical and ethical obligations of a 21<sup>st</sup> century public research university with a large, growing population of students and faculty whose profiles traverse socioeconomic class, gendered and racialized social identities, linguistic fluencies, sexualities, citizenship status, disabilities, religion, age, and other social-cultural categories.

Given the scope of its charge, the Gen Ed Com and UCR campus must invest significant time, labor, and capacities to this project. In addition to creating a process through which to engage campus constituencies and extra-campus communities, the Gen Ed Com should formulate a method for inviting input from Departments and Programs during the review process. During the initial phase of its work, the committee should formulate a clear timeline for its work and include an articulation of concrete goals for each step of the review process. This timeline must incorporate conceptual, pedagogical, administrative, and implementation dimensions in the construction of the review.

The Gen Ed Com should provide a quarterly report of its activities for circulation to the campus and is empowered to decide, in consultation with Academic Senate leadership and appropriate members of the administration, when it is prepared to generate a final report on UCR general education that includes recommendations for revision/transformation: most importantly, these recommendations should 1) outline the mission, rubric, and curricular makeup of UCR General Education requirements, and 2) provide a basic implementation plan that involves appropriate standing Senate committees and administrative offices. A component of this final report should include a discussion of budget and resource requirements for implementation of the proposed General Education curriculum, including but not limited to anticipated new faculty and lecturer positions in impacted departments, support for Teaching Assistant positions, and classroom space.

The term of committee appointment will be **two years**, to be extended if needed. The anticipated workload will include an inaugural retreat followed by annual retreats, biweekly-to-monthly meetings of the full committee, and execution of appropriately delegated tasks to be collectively determined by the Gen Ed Com membership. In order to facilitate a diverse, vibrant, and fully committed committee membership, each Gen Ed Com member will be supported by **one course release or research funding stipend (amount to be determined by Deans)** to be provided during the time of their appointment.

**Please note that course releases and research stipends are contingent on members' fulfillment of the committee's workload. Given the breadth and significance of its charge, attendance at Gen Ed Com meetings is imperative. Members are expected to participate equitably in the committee's collective work.**

I have included a list of links and quotations below that offer examples of the various ways that general education requirements are conceptualized and administered across the United States. It is worth noting that unlike most peer institutions, UCR *has no pedagogical statement* framing or justifying its breadth/general education requirements; thus, i have included examples of such statements below.

Peace.

Dylan Rodríguez  
Chair, UCR Division of the Academic Senate

## **Public Research Institutions**

### **University of Colorado, Boulder**

<https://www.colorado.edu/artsandsciences/undergraduate/degree-requirements/general-education-requirements>

“These requirements allow students to pursue their passions while also ensuring that they venture into diverse areas of learning. The flexibility of the Gen Ed requirements enables students to explore areas of particular interest in depth, and in so doing, facilitates the addition of minors or second majors. The Gen Ed requirements are straightforward, streamlined, and rigorous. As society changes and technology advances, the courses of study that comprise these requirements will evolve naturally within this durable framework.”

### **UCSD**

<http://ucsd.edu/catalog/front/GradReqs.html>

### **University of Texas**

<http://catalog.utexas.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-studies/academic-policies-and-procedures/#corecurriculum>

“The University strives to enroll exceptionally well-prepared, highly motivated students and to produce self-reliant graduates who will become leaders in both their chosen professions and their communities. The University must not only equip its graduates with occupational skills, but also educate them broadly enough to enable them to adapt to and cope with the accelerated process of change occurring in business, professional, and social institutions today. Students must be exposed to a broad spectrum of arts and science so that they may be educated beyond vocational requirements and thus be prepared for responsible citizenship in an increasingly complex world.”

### **Ohio State University**

[http://artsandsciences.osu.edu/sites/artsandsciences.osu.edu/files/BA\\_GE\\_SP18\\_2.pdf](http://artsandsciences.osu.edu/sites/artsandsciences.osu.edu/files/BA_GE_SP18_2.pdf)

“Ohio State's General Education (GE) is an integral part of an Arts and Sciences education. General education, as embodied in Arts and Sciences, provides the development of knowledge, perception, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand society's traditions and past, its accomplishments and aspirations, its relation and responsibility to the natural world, its diversity and plurality, and its problems and needs. The goal is for you to attain a sense of self within society that invites a continuing desire and ability to learn and work with others for future realization of the human potential. Specific goals aimed toward the broader goal of the GE are listed below under the twelve categories of the curriculum.”

### **University of Iowa**

<http://catalog.registrar.uiowa.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/general-education-program/>

“The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core requirements provide students with a broad foundation of knowledge and a focused practice of transferable skills necessary for a lifetime

of learning. GE CLAS Core courses are particularly valuable for students making the transition into the University of Iowa. They help students understand the academic expectations of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences while providing the knowledge and skills needed for more advanced work in the major.”

### **Northern Illinois University**

[http://catalog.niu.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=45&poid=10218](http://catalog.niu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=45&poid=10218)

“The baccalaureate experience at Northern Illinois University challenges students to think critically, create, and communicate by participating in a progressive, engaged learning environment. Major area studies, general education, and co-curricular experiences prepare students to become productive members of a culturally and globally diverse society, and lifelong learners ready to meet the challenges of a dynamic career.”

### **University of Akron**

<http://www.uakron.edu/general-education/>

“The program was designed to help students develop strong communication and critical thinking skills, a broad understanding of disciplinary areas, and the knowledge and skills necessary for responsible citizenship in an interconnected world. General Education is the foundation of all undergraduate degree programs at The University of Akron.

### **Arizona State University**

[https://catalog.asu.edu/ug\\_gsr](https://catalog.asu.edu/ug_gsr)

“A baccalaureate education should prepare students for a particular profession or advanced study and for constructive and satisfying personal, social and civic lives as well. In addition to depth of knowledge in a particular academic or professional discipline, students should also be broadly educated and develop the general intellectual skills they need to continue learning throughout their lives. Thus, the General Studies requirement complements the undergraduate major by helping students gain mastery of critical learning skills, investigate the traditional branches of knowledge and develop the broad perspective that frees one to appreciate diversity and change across time, culture and national boundaries.

“Critical learning skills include proficiency in the use of language, mathematics and quantitative methods as tools for acquiring, renewing, creating and communicating knowledge. A broad education includes an understanding of the methods and concerns of traditional branches of knowledge — the arts and humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences. Developing perspective requires historical, global and cross-cultural examination of knowledge of all kinds.”

### **Private Colleges:**

#### **Reed College**

[https://www.reed.edu/catalog/edu\\_program.html](https://www.reed.edu/catalog/edu_program.html)

“The Reed educational program pays particular attention to a balance between broad study in the various areas of human knowledge and close, in-depth study in a recognized academic discipline. All students take a one-year course in humanities. Distribution requirements that include the arts and humanities, social sciences, mathematics, foreign languages, and natural sciences expose the student to many different methods of intellectual inquiry. Typically, students begin to focus on one particular field by the close of their sophomore year.”

**Williams College (see “Distribution Requirement” section)**

<https://registrar.williams.edu/academic-information/degree-requirements/>

**Mills College**

<https://catalog.mills.edu/undergraduate/academic-requirements/general-education/>

“General education is the hallmark of a true liberal arts education, distinguishing it from an education focused solely on a specialized field. At Mills, we understand the importance of a student’s major for developing focused skills and knowledge in a specific field; however, we also know that our students come to us to gain a breadth of experiences, ideas, and skills. At the foundation of this program is our belief that a liberal arts education should offer the opportunity to explore and master a varied set of skills, perspectives, and disciplinary experiences. The General Education (GE) Program ensures that each Mills student will graduate with confidence in their intellectual abilities, a broad awareness of diverse ideas and perspectives, and an appreciation of and capacity for lifelong learning.”