

Annual Report

2002-2003

**General Education Committee
Oakland University**

**submitted by Robby Stewart, Chair
May 10, 2003**

General Education Committee Executive Summary of Annual Report 2002-2003

Submitted by Robby Stewart, Chair

Membership:

Faculty: Dagmar Cronn (Chemistry), Gene Fliedner (Business Administration), Catherine Haar (Rhetoric), Stacey Hahn (Modern Languages), Madelyn Kissock (Linguistics), Robby Stewart, chair (Psychology) [Note: Kissock served as acting chair during the Winter Semester when Stewart was on sabbatical leave]

Ex-officio: Susan Awbrey (Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education), Steve Shablin (Registrar), Carole Crum (Advising Steering Committee)

Student Representative: Jenn Evans

Meetings: The General Education Committee (GEC) met 5 times during the Fall 2002 semester (one meeting was canceled to permit attendance of a Senate meeting focusing on General Education and another was conducted via email) and 6 times during the Winter 2003 semester. The committee corresponded via email regularly and was, occasionally, able to complete its business without face-to-face meetings.

New Courses & Course Revisions:

none

Petitions of Exception for the General Education Requirements: The GEC reviewed 43 petitions of exception for general education requirements, approving 30, denying 13.

Triennial Review: During the 2002-2003 academic year courses in the areas of Language, Mathematics, Logic & Computer Science, and Natural Sciences & Technology areas were examined and discussed by committee members.

Problems and Concerns:

- Communication. In concluding the Triennial Review the GEC asked departments to: [1] place statements on syllabi indicating the course satisfied a specific area of the General Education requirement and specifying course learning objectives; [2] convene to review their General Education courses rather than provide individual reports; and [3] review the conclusion of the current Triennial Review.
- Assessment. Given the current articulation of the purposes and goals of assessment and the renovation of General Education the GEC committee did not take any actions in this domain. We are certain that new assessment plans will be developed once the recommendations of the first and second General Education Task Forces are considered and moved through governance.
- New Courses. As in the previous year, the GEC actively discouraged new course proposals and encouraged departments and faculty to wait until curricular changes proposed by the task forces are moved through governance.

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Membership

Faculty

Dagmar Cronn (Chemistry), Gene Fliedner (Business Administration), Catherine Haar (Rhetoric), Stacey Hahn (Modern Languages), Madelyn Kissock (Linguistics), Robby Stewart, chair (Psychology) [Note: Kissock served as acting chair during the Winter Semester when Stewart was on sabbatical leave]

Ex-officio

Susan Awbrey (Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education), Steve Shablin (Registrar), Carole Crum (Advising Steering Committee)

Student Representative

Jenn Evans

Meetings

The General Education Committee (GEC) scheduled 5 meetings during the Fall semester and met 6 times; one meeting was canceled to permit GEC members to attend a Senate meeting that would, in part, focus on issues of General Education, and another was conducted via email because the single-item agenda did not warrant a face-to-face meeting. Six meetings were scheduled during the Winter 2003 semester. The minutes of scheduled meetings are presented in an appendix to this document. (See Appendix A.)

The GEC work is outlined in its charge from the Senate:

To recommend to the Senate general policies and requirements for undergraduate education, to function as a curriculum committee for a university-wide program of general education, and to respond to petitions of exception relating to the program, in accordance with Senate authorizations, to communicate through regular exchange the minutes with the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction, and to provide information on petitions of exception regarding General Education to the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction for preparation of a university annual report on petitions of exception.

Early in the 2002-2003 academic year the GEC chair communicated with the chair of the Advising Steering Committee to review general petition procedures and to set a foundation for efficient inter-committee interactions. We have no doubt that this increased communication

between the committees has contributed positively to reducing both the number of petitions of exception received by GEC and the amount of time necessary to consider these petitions.

New Courses & Course Revisions

none

Petitions of Exception for the General Education Requirements

Between May 1, 2002 and May 1, 2003 the GEC reviewed 43 petitions of exception for general education requirements, approving 30, denying 13.

<u>Approved</u>	<u>2002-2003</u>	<u>2001-2002</u>	<u>2000-2001</u>
advisor error	5	1	4
1 credit waived	6	8	3
substitute coursework	17	17	22
distance learning/remote site	0	1	0
upper-level coursework completed	2	1	4
TOTAL	30	28	33
<u>Denied</u>			
petition sought more than 1 credit waiver	0	0	0
claim of advisor error not documented	0	1	5
course not appropriate	12	5	9
life experiences insufficient	1	1	3
TOTAL	13	7	17

Triennial Review

During the 2002-2003 academic year courses in the areas of Language, Mathematics, Logic & Computer Science, and Natural Sciences & Technology were examined and discussed by committee members. Results of the review were communicated to the chairs of the appropriate departments. For the review, the faculty teaching each course were asked to provide syllabi and course materials and to respond to an “instructor’s questionnaire” discussing how the course, for example “provides an understanding of how people express through the arts their experience with the world.” The department chair was asked to complete a statistical questionnaire about the frequency of offering and enrollments. Copies of the guidelines and questionnaires are appended to this document. (See Appendix B.)

The GEC recognized a number of situations that were common for all courses under review this year. The following were provided as a set of general recommendations for all departments:

1. Course syllabi should remind students that the course is a general education course and what category (area) of the General Education Requirements the course satisfies. Course objectives pertinent to the general education requirements should be summarized on the syllabi. The syllabi need to document the nature of the course and specify the objectives

of the course so as to assist reviewers involved in certification, accreditation, and course equivalency decisions.

2. It would be helpful if faculty members within a department met occasionally to review the course objectives and procedures for a given General Education course. Too often we received review statements where one faculty member indicated that the content of a given course content was determined entirely by the instructor and another faculty member indicated that the same content was determined either by the department curriculum committee or through a joint decision of instructors. We noted what we perceived to be rather large variances between section in course policies and practices, and were left to wonder whether the faculty members involved or their chair were aware that these variances existed. Please understand that our goal is not a strict, inflexible standardization of all General Education courses; instead we believe that we would be in a better position to understand and evaluate section differences if we knew that the faculty and chair involved were aware of the differences and accepted them.
3. The GEC strongly encourages department chairs to share the conclusions of the triennial review with their respective faculty. Too often we found replies to our query “What changes in the course were made after the last triennial review...” indicated that faculty did not know if any recommendations had been made or that they simply assumed that none were made. The GEC does not make recommendations for course modifications lightly, and it is our expectation that these recommendations will be considered and discussed at the departmental level.
4. The GEC would like to ask faculty members who complete the assessment questionnaires to review their own comments with some concern for internal consistency. We often found statements describing how students were involved in writing (Item A.6), but then were unable to find any information explaining how this writing was used to evaluate the student’s performance (Item C). Indeed, it was often the case that writing exercises described in responses to Item A.6 were not even mentioned on the course syllabus provided. Obviously, faculty members are free to base their evaluations of students on a number of different things, and the GEC is free to wonder just how “involved” a student may be in writing that apparently has no impact on their success in the course.

The results of the triennial review by field category are as follows:

Language

Retain: ALS 176, CHE 114, FRH 114, GRM 114, JPN 114, LIN 181, LIN 207, LTN 114, ML 192, RUS 114, SPN 114

Remove: none

Mathematics, Logic & Computer Science

Retain: LIN 180, MTH 118, MTH 121, MTH 122, MTH 154, PHL 102, PHL 107, STA 225, STA 226

Remove: CSE 125 (fails to meet objectives of GE courses)

Probation: CSE 130 (insufficient documentation presented; department invited to submit appropriate materials for review in Fall 2003 semester; failure to do so will result in course being removed from General Education list)

Natural Sciences & Technology

Retain: BIO 104, BIO 110, BIO 111, BIO 113, BIO 300, CHM 104, CHM 157, CHM 167, CHM 300, ENV 308, HS 201, LIN 182, PHY 101, PHY 104, PHY 105, PHY 106, PHY 120, PHY 151, SCI 300

Remove: none

Probation: PHY 107 (has not been taught in six years; new chair of Physics will review situation and report to GEC by January 5, 2004)

Problems and Concerns

Assessment. The assessment of student outcomes for General Education has been a problematic issue for a number of years. Given the current articulation of the purposes and goals of assessment and the renovation of General Education itself the GEC committee did not take any actions in this domain. We are certain that new assessment plans will be developed once the recommendations of the first and second General Education Task Forces are considered and moved through governance.

New Courses. As in the previous year, the GEC actively discouraged new course proposals and encouraged departments and faculty to wait until curricular changes proposed by the task forces are moved through governance.

Summary of Accomplishments

- Triennial Review of courses in Language; Mathematics, Logic & Computer Science; Natural Sciences & Technology -- Recommendation to retain 39 courses currently on the list, to remove one due to insufficient offerings, one due to overlap with other requirements, and two due to failure to demonstrate that objectives of General Education area requirements are addressed
- Examination and decision on 43 petitions of exception for General Education field categories

Appendix A
Minutes of the General Education Committee
2002-2003

NO UPDATE IS MADE ABOVE THIS LINE

February 2008

Updated by Debatosh Debnath, GEC Chair

The original version of this report is provided to the archivist of the Senate as a permanent record. An electronic copy of the original version is also saved with other GEC documents which is retained by the Committee chair.

The remainder of this report were primarily consisted of minutes of the meetings. They were deleted to prepare this version for posting at the Senate website. This is done by keeping FERPA in mind because minutes of GEC meetings contained name of students and information about their petitions.