

Oakland University General Education Committee Annual Report, 2025-2026

Submitted by:

Elizabeth Shesko, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History
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Linda Gamage, General Education Coordinator

Co-Chairs

Timothy Donahue (CAS)
Stephanie Mabry (SHS) Interim Co-Chair, Fall 2025 for Timothy Donahue
Elizabeth Shesko (CAS)

Faculty Members

Amber Bismack (SEHS)
Addington Coppin (SBA)
Mary Craig (CAS)
Thomas Discenna (CAS)
Debatosh Debnath (SECS)
Cheniece Harris (SON)
Katie Greer (UL)
Kevin Laam (CAS) Fall 2025 for Timothy Donahue
Qunfeng Liao (SBA)
Stephanie Mabry (SHS)
Jane Newman (SOM)
Cody Eldredge (CAS)

Staff Advising Member

Jade Dang (PAC-FYAC)

Student, Staff, and Ex-Officio Appointments

Vincenzo Martino (Student Congress)
Cynthia Carver (Co-Chair from GEAC-CAS)
Lauren Fillmore (Registrar Designee)
Linda Gamage (General Education Coordinator)
Kristin Landis-Piwowar (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs)
Kurt Kirkpatrick (Provost Designee)

Committee Charge (September, 2025)

1. To recommend to the Senate policies and requirements for undergraduate general education;
2. To function as a curriculum committee for the university-wide program of General Education;
3. To respond to petitions of exception relating to that program in accordance with Senate authorizations;
4. To communicate with the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction annually, providing information on petitions of exception from University requirements; and
5. To advise and coordinate with the General Education Assessment Committee to establish priorities for each academic year and exchange minutes. The co-chairs shall meet at least once each semester with the co-chairs of the General Education Assessment Committee.

Membership	Status	Term	Appointing Body
Thirteen faculty, (including one faculty from the Kresge Library), two as co-chairs	Voting	Staggered, 3-years	Senate upon nomination by the Steering Committee
Student Congress Undergraduate Representative	Voting	One (1) Year	Student Congress
Professional Adviser	Ex-officio and Non-voting	Staggered, 3-years	Professional Advising Council
General Education Coordinator	Ex-officio and Non-voting	While Coordinator or Appointed by the Executive VP for AA and Provost	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Co-Chair from the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC)	Ex-Officio and Non-voting	While Co-Chair	Senate upon nomination by the Steering Committee
Registrar (or designee)	Ex-officio and Non-voting	While Registrar or appointed by Registrar	Registrar
Vice Provost	Ex-officio and Non-voting	While Vice Provost	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Summary of Review Work

During the Summer of 2025 (April 30, 2025 through August 15, 2025) the committee reviewed and finalized:

- 31 Petitions of Exception
- 15 Transfer Course Reviews
- 11 Automatic Approvals for Petitions of Exception

During the Fall and Winter semesters (August 16, 2025 through April 30, 2026) the committee reviewed and finalized:

- 70 Petitions of Exception
- 14 Course Proposals for 16 attributes
- 31 Transfer Course Reviews
- 14 Non-Student Initiated Transfer Course Reviews (7 were IB courses/certificates)

Additionally, 37 automatic approvals of Petitions of Exception, 13 Petitions of Exception and 40 Transfer Course Reviews were received and finalized administratively without requiring full committee review.

Course proposals approved for the 2026-27 Catalog:

- HRD 1100/3100 - Social Science (SS) - After approving the course proposal for HRD 1100, the department submitted a request to renumber the course to HRD 3100. The Co-Chairs reviewed the updated syllabus, found no substantive changes, and determined that another full review was not required. HRD 3100 will retain the SS attribute.
- PHL 1400 - U.S. Diversity (DIV)
- FLM 3410 - Global Perspectives (GP)

- EC 4446 - Writing Intensive in the Major (WIM)
- ENG 1600 - Literature (LIT)
- ENG 2400 - LIT
- ENG 3605 - LIT
- ENG 1400 - LIT and DIV

Course proposals denied for the 2026-27 Catalog:

- ET 2000 - Western Civilization (WCIV)
- ISE 4421 - GP and Knowledge Application (KA)
- HRD 2410 - WCIV
- HRD 2410 - WCIV (Denied a second time after modifications were made to the original proposal)

SPN 1190 was discontinued and removed from the Language and Culture (LG) course listing.

The School of Business updated the course titles and descriptions for QMM 2400 (Formal Reasoning) and QMM 2410 (KA). The Co-Chairs reviewed the updated syllabi and the assessment plans and determined that, while the updates are significant, the fundamental nature of the courses was unchanged, and the learning outcomes continue to be met. New course proposals were deemed unnecessary for the courses to retain the attributes.

Communication created a combined (B.A./M.A.) program that uses COM 5002 to satisfy the Capstone (CAP) requirement. Because only undergraduate-level courses can officially carry General Education attributes, Petitions of Exception (POEs) will be required for students on this track. The committee reviewed the syllabus for COM 5002 and determined it meets the CAP learning outcomes. Consequently, future student POEs can be automatically approved when the submitted syllabus is substantively identical.

Film Studies updated the course number for FLM 2320 to FLM 3410, indicating that while the content remained the same, the renumbering more accurately reflected the workload and expectations of the course and allowed students in their majors to count the course as an elective. The Co-Chairs reviewed the syllabus, verified that the content meeting GP remained the same, and determined it would not require a full committee review to retain the attribute. They recommended that GEAC also review the assessment plans.

Recognizing that the International Baccalaureate policy had not been reviewed by the GEC since 2013, the committee conducted a comprehensive audit of IB course structures, certificates and diplomas, and the transfer policies of peer Michigan institutions. As a result, the committee determined that Higher Level (HL) certificate courses should be evaluated and updated in a manner parallel to AP courses. The following IB Certificates were approved for general education attributes when appropriate test scores are reported:

Language A: Language and Literature (English) HL - LIT
 Language A: Literature (English) HL - LIT
 Geography HL - GP
 Visual Arts HL - ART
 History of Africa and the Middle East HL - GP

Committee Functioning

The General Education Committee (GEC) held nine meetings between September 2025 and April 2026.

Committee Liaisons and Collaborations

- GEAC: As co-chairs of the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) and liaisons to GEC, Cynthia Carver and Tom Bianchette attended GEC meetings. The committees maintained communication by sharing meeting minutes via the Senate Shared Drive Committee Folders. On November 4, 2025, the co-chairs and coordinators met to refine the course proposal review process and discuss assessment for the Honors College courses carrying General Education attributes.
- UCUI: Liz Shesko served as the liaison to the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (UCUI), attending the UCUI meetings through Fall 2025. Kurt Kirkpatrick assumed the liaison role for the Winter 2026 semester. Tim Donahue and Linda Gamage met with Kurt to review potential tracking issues as curricular items move through UCUI.
- GEPRAC: Liz Shesko, Tim Donahue and Linda Gamage regularly attended the General Education Program Revision Ad Hoc Committee (GEPRAC) meetings throughout the academic year. This included participation in two weeks of summer 2025 work sessions to refine the revision models and create sample syllabi for First-Year Experience (FYE) courses. They provided continuous updates regarding the work, needs and events linking the committees.
- Liz Shesko and Linda Gamage attended the April 8, 2026, Professional Advising Council (PAC) meeting. They reviewed POE and TCR processes, outlined necessary documentation, shared the updated LG Guidelines, clarified criteria for stop-out students, and detailed the modifications to the Automatic Approvals List. The advisers were asked to include specific notes in Degree Works regarding community college course selection to meet Gen Ed requirements.

Document and Process Updates

- The GEC Handbook, housed on espace, was updated with current processes and helpful links. The Co-Chairs and coordinator also collaborated with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) to update the Faculty Handbook.
- The Background Document used by the GEC for reviewing Petitions of Exception and Transfer Course Reviews was updated.
- In December of 2025, the GEC reviewed the General Education section of the catalog and determined that no updates were needed. Following catalog publication, a

redundancy was identified in the Language and Culture (LG) special note. This arose when the Office of the Registrar updated the course list to include all courses with the LG attributes rather than only those being assessed. After consulting with the GEAC Co-Chairs, coordinators, the Department of Modern Languages and Literature, the Office of the Registrar and Kurt Kirkpatrick, the committee reverted to the previous listing of the LG courses and modified the note to state:

“Students may meet this requirement in one of the following ways: 1. satisfactory completion of any of the courses on the list below; 2. satisfactory completion of a course above 1140 in a modern language listed below or above 1500 in American Sign Language (providing the credits from the course are not used to satisfy any other general education area requirement). “

- The GEC eSpace, website and Employee Resource Network (ERN) content were updated to ensure ADA compliance.
- The General Education Transfer Course Review Form was simplified, updated and deployed on September 8, 2025. The links to the form were found in multiple locations on the website and updated.
- The General Education Petition of Exception form was updated in 2024-25 to include preferred name. It was updated this year to ensure that the legal first name was removed from the subject line and all email notifications generated by the workflow when preferred name is present. Adjustments were also made to the form logic to ensure that stop-out and returning student names were displayed correctly.
- Jade Dang worked with Linda Gamage to update the Adviser Reference for Gen Ed POE Process on the ERN, adding workflow illustrations and email notification samples.
- Liz Shesko, Tim Donahue and Linda Gamage documented the current Co-Chair responsibilities and provided it to committee members as they were considering nominations for the next Co-Chair.
- Linda Gamage updated access to the BDM archive folder for course proposals prior to 2017 to include Tina Li from OIRADA. A note documenting this archive was added to the eSpace folder for Closed Course Proposals.

Leadership Transitions

The committee recognized and thanked Liz Shesko for her dedicated service and leadership as Co-Chair. Tim Donahue will continue as Co-Chair of GEC. Cody Eldredge was unanimously approved to serve as incoming Co-Chair beginning Fall 2026.

Committee Communication

Following the submission of the 2024-25 GEC Annual Report, the Co-Chairs sent emails to the Deans, Chairs and Program Directors as well as to the Advising Directors summarizing the work of the committee.

Policy and Practice Updates

- The committee occasionally receives documentation in languages other than English. To balance institutional needs with student financial considerations, the committee determined that professional translation requirements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to minimize costs to the student.
- The committee voted to update the General Education Petition of Exception Automatic Approval List to include a description and new items 6, 7, and 8:

General Education Petition of Exception Automatic Approvals

Last Updated and Approved by General Education Committee on 2/23/26

Petitions of Exception that meet the criteria listed here are posted to espace for automatic approval by the Co-Chairs and/or Coordinator without additional review by the full committee.

1. Substitution of an upper level OU course not approved for the requirement when it is a continuation of a lower level course that does meet the requirement

Example: CHM 1450 - General Chemistry II has a prerequisite of CHM 1440 General Chemistry I which satisfies NSTN. If a student takes CHM 1450 without taking CHM 1440, (perhaps transfers Chemistry I, or tests out), a petition to satisfy NSTN would be automatically approved.

2. Adviser or Records error with documentation

3. Course taken prior to approval for the GE requirement with verification of no substantive content change

Example: COM 1500 was approved to satisfy LG in the 2020-21 catalog. If a student took the course prior to the catalog, but submitted a POE with a syllabus that is substantively similar to the syllabus approved, the POE will be approved.

4. ME 4998 and ECE 4998 (Senior Project) for CAP and WIM with verification of the CAP learning outcomes, 8 WI criteria, and Department Approval.

5. Math courses at a higher level than MTH 1554 (Calculus 1) for FR

6. COM 5002 for CAP when the student is planning to participate in the Communication, Combined B.A./M.A. program with verification that the syllabus is substantively the same as the syllabus approved by the committee on 2/27/26

7. Two courses from different departments with the WIM attribute to satisfy both WIM and WIG. The intent is to remove barriers for students with a double major or a minor who have taken two WIM courses in varied disciplines.

8. Two WIGs in place of a WIM if the department does not have a WIM or has already approved a substitution for the student for the major requirement.

- The committee reviewed and approved AP World History: Modern for Global Perspectives (GP) in addition to its existing Western Civilization (WCIV) attribute. The Office of the Registrar reported that this decision positively impacted over 90 students.
- The committee voted to add the following to the student-facing Language and Culture Guidelines on the website (see below for later modifications that affected these guidelines):

Students with the Seal of Biliteracy are welcome to submit, for consideration, a Petition of Exception with a copy of the Seal and the results of the test taken to achieve it.

- Liz Shesko queried departments with combined Bachelor's to Master's Degree programs to determine how the CAP and WIM requirements are being met. The committee determined that when a graduate-level course is cross-listed with an undergraduate-level course that satisfies these requirements, a Petition of Exception will be automatically approved.
- The GEC updated its internal guidance document (Background Document) to include the following clarifications for committee members:
 - Formal Reasoning (FR): The committee debated whether courses equivalent to MTH 1331 (algebra), 1332 (trigonometry), and 1441 (precalculus) should be considered to satisfy FR, given that they do so at OCC, MCC and GVSU. Following data from Renee Ligeski regarding institutional impacts, the committee opted to continue evaluating these on a case-by-case basis rather than implementing a blanket policy for review in the document.
 - Following a POE waiver request linked to a disability accommodation, the committee consulted with Kristen Swan, Director of DSS and OU Testing Center. A protocol was added indicating the accommodation-related requests must originate with DSS to protect student privacy and prevent the sharing of confidential medical documentation with faculty.
 - The KA context section was condensed for clarity.
 - The following text regarding holistic review of POEs was added:

In general, requests have been treated holistically - considering a wide variety of factors submitted with requests, including but not limited to whether GESLOs are satisfied, progress to degree, transfer history, role of course in a major structure, course level, course schedule (breakdown of topics and assignments), change of majors, and other details shared by a student. For the purpose of deliberations, the committee may bring in or ask for additional information beyond what is provided exclusively by the student/request.

- The committee continued to review how General Education attributes are applied by the Honors College, identifying courses carrying multiple foundations and explorations attributes along with some other inconsistencies. The Co-Chairs met and corresponded

with Dean Graeme Harper to ensure these concerns will be addressed. The discrepancies will be systematically resolved as part of the broader General Education program overhaul.

- To align official policy with institutional practices, the committee proposed a formal restructuring of its membership to include:
 - A designee from the Office of the Provost
 - A member from each of four CAS areas and each school when possible
 - Multiple designees from the Office of the Registrar

On March 19, 2026, the University Senate officially approved the following update to the membership within the GEC's charge:

Membership	Status	Term	Appointing Body
Five College faculty representing each of the following areas: science and mathematics; humanities; social sciences; languages and literature; and SMTD	Voting	Staggered, 3-years	Senate upon nomination by the Steering Committee
One faculty member representing each of the following units: SBA, SECS, SHS, SEHS, SON, and Kresge Library	Voting	Staggered, 3-years	Senate upon nomination by the Steering Committee
Two at-large faculty members, from any unit (including OUWB and ERI)	Voting	Staggered, 3-years	Senate upon nomination by the Steering Committee
Two faculty members, from above, to be appointed as co-chair	Voting	Staggered, 2-years	General Education Committee

Following this approval, Liz Shesko collaborated with the Provost's Office to stagger the revised appointments. This balancing logic guarantees that each incoming three-year

cohort has 4-5 faculty members and includes at least one faculty representative from each foundational disciplinary area (STEM, Social Sciences and Humanities).

- The committee received a presentation from Kurt Kirkpatrick to demonstrate reviewing a student's record from a holistic perspective. This included specific items and where they are located in Degree Works as well as transfer considerations. This document will be included in orientation information for new committee members.
- Following a proposal by Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo, (Chair of Modern Languages and Literature), and subsequent deliberations on eSpace and in multiple meetings, the committee unanimously approved four updates to the Language and Culture Guidelines currently in place for Petitions of Exception:
 1. Naming the ACTFL intermediate-mid level as the test-score expectation for successful POEs. (This score corresponds to OU's existing CLEP standards.)
 2. Designating the Avant STAMP 4S Exam and Language Testing International's Oral Proficiency Interview and Writing Proficiency Test as the Committee's preferred proficiency tests.
 3. Altering the acceptable level for transcript consideration in POEs from the 7th to the 9th grade and onward.
 4. Disallowing AAPPL test results in POE considerations, as they do not align with college-level assessment benchmarks
- As part of the approved LG Guidelines for POEs, the committee began accepting test results from Avant to demonstrate language proficiency levels and began recommending this testing to students when appropriate. In February 2026, Avant discontinued sales of individual testing to students. Linda Gamage received approval from Kristin Landis-Piwowar and authorization from Jayson Hall, Assistant General Counsel, to enter into a contract with Avant to establish a storefront specific to OU on Avant's website, maintained by Avant, for students to purchase tests and proctoring. OU has access to the results via a link, login and password that Avant has provided.
- The Gen Ed block in Degreeworks is being used to enforce program requirements, which does not provide transparency to students. Liz Shesko, Tim Donahue and Linda Gamage shared this concern with Lauren Fillmore from the Office of the Registrar and Kurt Kirkpatrick. In response, Lauren Fillmore moved minimum grade requirements to a major prerequisite block for six majors. For the four remaining majors that require a minimum grade for all general education courses, Kurt Kirkpatrick will work with the departments to modify the requirement.