

# **Oakland University**

## **2020-2021 General Education Committee Annual Report**

**Chairperson** – Maria Paino

**Voting Members**

Stephen Bazinski (SECS)

Felicia Chong (CAS)

Addington Coppin (SBA)

Scott Crabill (CAS)

Sarah Hosch (CAS)

Amanda Lynch (SHS)

Kristen Munyan (SON)

Samuel Rosenthal (CAS)

Adina Schneeweis (CAS)

Emily Spunaugle (KL)

Yin Yu-Thompson (SBA)

Kasaundra Tomlin (SBA)

Deborah VanderLinde (CAS)

**Non-Voting Members**

Christy Bryant (Registrar Designee)

Melanie Chamberlain (PAC)

Susanne Condron (Assessment Coordinator)

Anne Hitt (Associate Provost)

Song Yan (Director, OIRA)

Matt Zeig (Registrar Designee)

**General Education Coordinator** – Linda Gamage

From April 16, 2020 through May 15, 2021, the committee reviewed and finalized:

- 152 Petitions of Exception
- 28 Course Proposals
- 45 Transfer Course Reviews
- 7 Non-Student Initiated Transfer Course Reviews

In addition, there were 36 automatic approvals of Petitions of Exception, 45 Petitions of Exception and 51 Transfer Course Reviews received and finalized without committee review.

Courses Approved for the 2020-21 Catalog:

- COM 1501 – LG
- COM 2500 – LG
- COM 2501 – LG

Courses Approved for the 2021-22 Catalog:

- PH 3000 – DIV and SS
- COM 2501 – KA
- MUS 1017 – GP
- COM 2500 – KA
- EXS 4715 – CAP, WIM and WIG
- REL 3735 – WCIV and GP (but not both for the same student)
- NTR 3140 – GP
- AH 1003 – GP
- ENG 3690 – LIT
- EHS 1100 – SS
- COM 3603 – ART
- WGS 3040 – GP and DIV
- SOC 1010 – SS and DIV
- WRT 3071 – WIG and WIM
- PHL 1320 – WCIV

Courses Approved for the 2022-23 Catalog:

- EED 3100 – DIV and WIM
- PHL 1320 – WCIV
- FRH 1600 – WCIV and GP (but not both for the same student)
- WRT 2065 – WIG and WIM
- FRH 1610 – WCIV and GP (but not both for the same student)
- WRT 3020 – WCIV

#### Courses Reviewed and Denied:

- WRT 3064 – SS
- WRT 3071 – ART
- RDG 2200 – LIT
- WRT 2065 - FR

The committee held 6 meetings. All meetings were held remotely due to Covid-19.

The General Education Committee (GEC) exchanged minutes and updates with the new standing committee formed in 2020 to assist with assessment, the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC).

In November 2020, the GEAC, co-chaired by Lori Ostergaard and Amanda Nichols-Hess, attended the GEC meeting to provide an update on their charge, committee members, and initiatives. The overlapping members of the committees are Lori Ostergaard and Kristen Munyan.

The committees developed a process for evaluating and responding to course proposals. The GEAC will evaluate the assessment portion of the proposal and provide their results to the GEC so that once the decision regarding the proposal is finalized, the department will receive one letter with feedback regarding the proposal and assessment, sent by the Chair of the GEC. If the assessment portion of the proposal requires additional work, the course proposal can still be approved and the department can move forward, working with Susanne Condron and the GEAC to solidify the assessment plan.

The GEAC reviewed and shared assessment reports from 20 general education courses during 2020-2021, representing many of the Explorations areas (Arts, Formal Reasoning, Global Perspective, Natural Science and Technology, Literature, Western Civilization) and Integration Areas (Capstone). Two course assessments received a "Mature" rating, 18 received a "Developing/Progressing" rating. An additional 17 course assessments were received toward the end of 2021 and are scheduled for review in Fall 2021.

The GEC received a few requests regarding extensions on course assessments needed because of the abrupt change to remote due to Covid-19. The committee determined that leeway would be granted, but assessments should still be completed in a timely manner. Susanne Condron sent communication to the departments regarding the schedule for assessments, with tips to stay on schedule and offers of assistance.

During the summer of 2020, the Detroit Institute of Music Education (DIME) lost its affiliation with Metropolitan State University – Denver, and began exploring a collaboration with Oakland University to assist the remaining students. Lori Ostergaard, Maria Paino, Anne Hitt and Matt Zeig worked together to determine a policy for satisfying general education requirements with similar courses taken through DIME. Anne and Matt presented a policy regarding this to Senate in Fall 2020.

Matt Zeig presented a change to the Out of State Transfer Policy to be more consistent with the MTA requirements. Instead of requiring two courses equivalent to WRT 1050 and WRT 1060, the committee approved a change to require an equivalent of WRT 1060 and a communications course.

The committee received approval and funding from the provost to send several representatives from Oakland University to a conference in Vermont during the summer of 2020 to begin exploring changes to the overall General Education Program. Because of Covid-19, the committee's participation in the conference was canceled. The committee continued to discuss the need for overall revisions to the General Education Program. In April, 2021, the committee was surveyed regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program and Maria presented the results to the GEC and GEAC. The GEC reaffirmed the need to move forward with revision of the program.

The committee reviewed a few course proposals submitted to satisfy learning outcomes for more than one requirement, but when applied to a student's record, only one will be allowed. These proposals are becoming more common. There are 7 courses in the catalog that already have approval. The committee discussed how much content should be necessary in a course to satisfy the learning outcomes of a requirement, and if there is enough space in one course to cover multiple requirements satisfactorily. There is no definition of how much content is required per learning outcome, but the committee determined that it would be rare that a course could satisfy multiple requirements effectively.

The committee discussed advantages provided to transfer students over OU students based on current policies. Some of the advantages are:

- Equivalencies awarded to transfer courses with current date rather date course taken
- MTA/OSTP awarded with both completion and reverse transfer
- OU equivalents satisfying requirements
- WIG waived for all transfer students

The committee will be mindful of this issue when considering future policies and a revision to the program.

The General Education pages in the catalog for 2021-22 were updated. Grammatical and cosmetic updates were made.

The committee continued discussion regarding the importance of both Writing Intensive requirements. Anne Hitt confirmed that the original intent of the task force that created the Writing Intensive in the Major and Writing Intensive in General Education requirements was to ensure that students had the ability to write well in both their major area of study and in other areas. When those requirements were put in place, there were not many courses that satisfied WIG, so students were able to satisfy it using two WIM courses. The intent was to work towards offering enough courses to satisfy the WIG requirement so that both WIG and WIM would eventually be required for all students. The committee found that there are now several courses offered, in several rubrics, satisfying the WIG requirement. Maria Paino discussed this topic during a department chairs meeting for CAS, and received positive feedback regarding requiring both WIG and WIM moving forward. The committee reviewed concerns about any negative impact on students whose current plans include two WIM courses, and determined that students with a plan in progress, under previous catalogs, will still be able to use two WIM courses. The committee voted to remove the language from the 2021-22 catalog that allowed students to complete the writing intensive requirements with two WIM courses. Students on the 2021-22 catalog must complete both a WIM and a WIG course.

The committee approved NTR 3140 to satisfy GP, but not by the deadline for the 2020-21 catalog, and the course was running with the approved syllabus in winter 2021. The committee will automatically approve any POE submitted for this if the course was taken in winter 2021.

There were several course proposals submitted to the GEC that seemed to be “out of the department’s area” and this was a concern for the committee. Specifically, the GEC does not want it to become a trend where departments attempt to provide all gen-ed requirements “in-house” for their own majors. Several committee members expressed concern because the intent of General Education is to provide students with a broad experience that includes subjects and provides skills *outside* their major. The General Education experience should offer a “walk across the university.” Students should be satisfying the requirements in courses outside their major when appropriate, taught by experts in the subject matter. While this is not built into the General Education Program, it is the intent.

Paul Battle and Shannon Esselink presented several proposals to the committee to assist stop out students and students who take courses over a significant length of time, spanning requirement changes. While the committee is understanding about these issues when they are petitioned, there is a need to provide up to date, realistic evaluation information online for a student, or potential student in Degree Works. After refining the proposals to ensure that the general education outcomes are met, the committee approved the following:

- Students in the following population can use the General Education Requirements in place prior to 2005:
  - Admitted to Oakland University prior to fall of 2005 who have:
  - Completed Oakland University courses between 2000-2020
  - Achieved senior status (completed 90 credits) before winter of 2021
  - Satisfied at least 6 of the 9 previous general education requirements:
    - ART
    - LIT
    - LG
    - WCIV
    - IS (or GP if still needed)
    - SS
    - MLCS (or FR if still needed)
    - NST (or NSTN if still needed)
    - ETH (or DIV if still needed)
- Students who attended between 2000 and 2020, have not completed their undergraduate degree, and have taken a course that was previously not approved as a Capstone course, but has been approved as of fall 2020, can satisfy the General Education Capstone requirement with that course.
- The respective departments have confirmed that the following courses did not change substantively since it was determined that they satisfied the KA learning outcomes, so the KA attribute will be retroactively added for:
  - MTH 1555 (155)
  - PHY 1520 (152)
  - PHY 1020 (102)

- PSY 2250 (225)
- JRN 2000 (200)
- Any second year (2140 or 2150) modern language course

The GEAC attended the April, 2021 GEC meeting for an update of both committees, and a discussion of the strengths, weaknesses, and issues with the current General Education Program.

Paul Battle asked the committee to consider allowing quarter hour school courses that transfer as less than 3 credits, but meet the learning outcomes of a general education requirement, to satisfy the requirement. In the past, the committee has determined that a course must be a minimum of 3 credits to satisfy a requirement. The committee began online discussion regarding this request.

The Elementary Education program recently revised its program requirements to more closely match the updated state certification requirements. Because of this, the current students will be updated to the 2021-22 catalog. However, that catalog now requires both a WIG and a WIM, but the program update was built allowing two WIMs to satisfy the writing intensive requirements, per previous catalogs. Roberta Rea asked that the current students be approved to satisfy the requirements with 2 WIMs, even after being updated to the 2021-22 catalog. The committee approved this for the 14 students that Roberta identified. There may be additional students who will need to submit petitions.

Maria Paino plans to lead a retreat to explore revisions to the program. Former and new members of GEC and GEAC will be invited to attend.

The committee expressed appreciation for Maria Paino's leadership and hard work and agreed that she will continue as the chairperson for the 2021-22 academic year.