

General Education Committee
Final Report for May 1, 2020 General Faculty Meeting

Prepared by Michelle Garland, Chair of General Education Committee (2019-2020)

The General Education Committee met once a month (September to April), with the exception of March due to COVID-19. The committee met twice in April to make up for the missed March meeting, totaling eight meetings for the academic year. All of the meetings were conducted in person with the exception of the April meetings, which were conducted through Zoom. Monthly meeting minutes were kept by committee Secretary, Courtney McDonald.

This was a year of revision for general education. To start the year, the committee revised the faculty manual description (see Appendix A), as requested by the Faculty Senate Chair, and created a 3-year plan for committee activities. The remainder of the year focused on reviewing and revising the general education competencies and student learning objectives through evaluation of assessment data, AACU rubrics, peer and regional institutional general education programs and competencies, and the like. The revised competency list with aligning student learning objectives, after multiple iterations, are in final review by the committee and will be presented to Academic Affairs at the start of the fall semester (see Appendix B for the working draft).

One new general education course proposal was submitted in the fall semester, and it was approved. Two new general education courses and one course deletion proposal were received in the spring semester, and additional information has been requested. Voting has been tabled until such information is received. The committee also discussed moving the general education forms to a digital format for a more time-efficient process of approval paperwork.

In the last meeting, the committee reviewed the 3-year plan and revised as needed (see Appendix C). Additionally, Courtney McDonald was voted to be the next Chair of the General Education Committee.

Appendix A

General Education Committee Description

Approved 10-30-2019

The General Education Committee is composed of one designated representative from each unit. The Committee reports to the Faculty Senate. The Committee is charged with oversight of the design of the general education program and ensuring it reflects current best practices. This oversight includes regularly reviewing assessment data and making recommendations based on these data when program changes are needed to better address competencies. The Committee is responsible for providing cohesive and collaborative discussions and decisions related to the general education program. The Committee establishes the definitions, criteria, and competencies for each University general education area, reviews syllabi and approves all courses used to satisfy University general education requirements, facilitates periodic review of all courses fulfilling general education requirements, as stated in the USC Upstate Academic Catalog, and makes recommendations to Faculty Senate for modification or termination of courses in the general education program. The Committee consults with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Compliance, the Office of Student Affairs, the Academic Affairs Committee, and the Assessment Committee to make informed decisions and recommendations. The Committee coordinates faculty development programming for implementing general education student learning outcomes. The Committee facilitates and encourages campus dialogue and communication regarding general education.

Appendix B

Working SLO Statements

Competency 1: Communication

Written

Uses organization, content, credible sources, style, and clear language to communicate relevant meaning appropriate to the audience

Oral

Delivers an organized, cohesive, compelling, and credible presentation as appropriate to the audience

Competency 2: Technology & Information

Literacy (acquisition and evaluation)

Chooses and evaluates a variety of information sources appropriate to the scope and discipline of the research question

Integration

Adapts and applies technological skills to new situations to solve problems

Competency 3: Quantitative Reasoning

Scientific Method

Applies appropriate concepts, tools, and techniques of scientific inquiry

Numeracy

Explains, analyzes, interprets, and/or makes inferences about information presented in numerical or mathematical forms

Competency 4: Qualitative Reasoning

Critical Thinking

Employs logical techniques to determine the strength of arguments

Problem Solving

Identifies, organizes, and synthesizes relevant evidence in support of a feasible solution

Interpretation

Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns

Competency 5: Perspective Taking

Historical

Evaluates and/or applies historical perspectives to complex subjects with attention to diverse interpretations

Political

Evaluates and/or applies political perspectives to complex subjects with attention to diverse interpretations

Artistic

Evaluates and/or applies artistic perspectives to complex subjects with attention to diverse interpretations

Intercultural

Evaluates and/or applies intercultural perspectives to complex subjects with attention to diverse interpretations

Competency &: Ethical Reasoning

Ethics

Considers significant implications of general ethical principles as applied to specific moral issues

Appendix C

General Education Committee 3-Year Plan University of South Carolina Upstate

3-Year Plan Goal: To create a process that produces useful results and recommendations.

Year 1: 2019-2020

Fall

1. Review the current general education competencies and rubrics.
 - a. Review general education competencies at other universities.
 - b. Review AACU general education rubrics.
 - c. Discuss the overall mission of the general education program.
 - d. Review the equity of general education competency distribution.
2. Create/adapt updated competencies.
3. Approve adapted competencies.

Spring

4. Create student learning objectives to align with each competency.
5. Approve new student learning objectives.
6. Discuss process for ensuring general education courses meet adapted competencies.
7. Discuss updating processes and procedures for course approval.

Summer

8. Assess artifacts (e.g. course embedded, ePortfolio).
9. Revise the 3-year plan based on results and recommendations.

Year 2: 2020-2021

Fall

1. Adapt/create assessment rubrics.
2. Update the general education course listing based on new competencies.
3. Inform faculty teaching general education courses that they will need to complete a form for approval of continuation of the course in the general education program.
 - a. This form will require a course description that aligns with the adapted competency, a specific assignment for general education assessment of the identified competency, and a rationale for how the course and assignment align with the competency.
4. Create sample assignments that align with rubric measurement of the adapted competencies (to provide to those teaching general education courses).

Spring

5. Implement the revised rubrics.

6. Select new courses for the revised general education program (courses will need to complete the course catalog paperwork for approval).
7. Encourage submissions for new general education courses.
8. Create training workshops for creating assignments that align with competencies and rubrics and syllabi that articulate the assignment and competency alignment.

Summer

9. Assess artifacts (e.g. course embedded, ePortfolio).
10. Revise the 3-year plan based on results and recommendations.

Year 3: 2021-2022

Fall

1. Gather data from faculty, administrators, staff, and students regarding their perceptions of the updated courses, competencies, rubrics, and ePortfolio process.
2. Offer ongoing general education and assessment-related training opportunities.

Spring

3. Evaluate the success of the general education program and revised assessment process.
 - a. Discuss strengths and weaknesses.
 - b. Identify areas the need improvement.
4. Create an action plan for the upcoming years and a tentative timeline for the action plan.

Summer

5. Assess artifacts (e.g. course embedded, ePortfolio).
6. Produce a report of the 3-year plan outcomes and recommendations.

*****This plan is tentative in nature and will be adjusted as needed based on discussions with faculty, administrators, and students.*****