

TO: Richard Watts, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Ursula Mahlendorf, Chair  
GE Committee

SUBJECT: GE Taskforce Report

At its June 6, 2001 meeting, the GE Committee discussed the GE Taskforce Report, and the committee requested that I forward the results of our discussion to you. The GE Committee finds itself in complete agreement with the Taskforce. Its findings concerning the present requirement and the analysis of its many shortcomings agree with our experience of the oversight (or rather the unworkability) of the present requirements, and we enthusiastically support all Taskforce recommendations. Our Annual Report comments on a number of the specific concerns we have with the present requirements and their administration (or lack thereof). Foremost among them, are the sheer number of courses and programs which come before the committee each year, and the evaluation of which, occupies us to the exclusion of any deliberation of the larger pedagogical and philosophical issues which should be our proper business. Our concerns about oversight and appropriateness of GE offerings are increased manifold considering the proposed restructuring of the Senate and the merging of the GE Committee into an Undergraduate Council charged with *all* aspects of undergraduate education at UCSB.

We wish to emphasize particularly, however, that none of the recommendations of the Taskforce should be adopted by the Senate *unless* the recommended administrative office at Dean's level with adequate staff support is made available by the UCSB administration. In this committee's view, an effective general education program needs the planning, funding, coordination, and quality control that only a line officer can provide who is specifically charged with this task and with the authority to carry it out. If this condition is not met, the present GE requirement as imperfect as it is should remain in force. But neither the faculty nor the administration should harbor the illusion that the campus is doing an even adequate job in giving our students the kind of general education knowledge which our graduates should have so as to fulfill their civic obligations to their society.

Finally, the GE Committee does not agree with the Taskforce minority report. We have found that the present division into Western/Non-Western requirements is confusing and increasingly problematic. A specific Western requirement, however, is not needed since the default position of most present EG culture/civilization courses favors Western cultures.