

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SPECIAL ACADEMIC SENATE COMMITTEE TO REVISE THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

November 3, 1993

The charge to the Special Committee to Revise the General Education Program (resolution of June 4, 1992) was "to review and revise the General Education Program." Though various components of the GEP were instituted at various times, we took the inclusive view that GEP refers to both the broad subject areas as well as the several special subject requirements. The changes proposed by the Committee:

1. Greatly simplify, while preserving the integrity of, the General Education Program.
2. By enlarging student choice, properly shift more of the responsibility for planning students' academic programs to students themselves.
3. Introduce important new options: formal minors and individualized programs of general education study (for eligible students).
4. Put an end to the "drift" toward bureaucracy and mindless enforcement of poorly articulated regulations.
5. Restore the effective guiding role of the faculty, via the appropriate Academic Senate agencies.
6. Provide for the on-going developmental needs of GEP.

Taken as a whole, we believe that the changes proposed represent a major improvement of GEP that will make it responsive to the academic and professional interests of students and faculty, and also sufficiently adaptable to changing budgetary constraints. The unintended pitfalls and irrationalities of the existing system have been eliminated. Students will have much easier sailing in planning their academic programs and in tracking progress toward their degrees. The burdens of administrators and staff will be substantially eased. The workload of faculty, we estimate, will be marginally increased.

The Committee's recommendations are presented in four parts, according to whether they: (I) preserve features of the existing GEP (introduced in 1985; in 1986 for engineering students); (II) involve changes that are to be implemented for the 1994-95 academic year; (III) involve changes that may require a two to three-year start-up period; and (IV) involve proposals that require further deliberation on the part of the faculty and Academic Senate agencies in consultation with the Administration.

I Features Retained

1. **General Subject Areas (A-F. with the addition of Area G. Literature) are retained.** and requirements are described in terms of these areas.

- a. Area E, Civilization and Thought (divided into E-1: Western Civilization and E-2: World Civilizations and Thought) remains the same. The E-1 requirement is any two courses from the sequences of courses listed, beginning with Art History 6 A-B-C.
- b. As a guide to student planning, all existing subdivisions and disciplinary designations (e.g., "Economic Systems" under D, "Aesthetics" under F) are retained as descriptive categories in descriptions of the program in the **General Catalog** and the **General Education Program Requirements** brochure.

(Designations C 1-3, D 1-4, F 1-2a-2b will be dropped).

2. **All special subject area requirements are retained**, as follows: American History and Institutions (one course); Non-western Culture (one course); Quantitative Relationships one course); Ethnicity (one course); Writing (six courses).
3. **The list of GE-approved courses is retained.**
4. **All unit requirements remain the same.** (The total is 72; for most students the required number is 60 or less, often much less, depending on major, transfer credit, and Advanced Placement).

II. To Be Instituted Fall 1994

1. **"Objectives and Definitions" of Areas C-F/G**, heading the listings of courses comprising the general subject areas, are to be printed in the **General Catalog** and **General Education Program Requirements**. (The omission of these statements was either an egregious oversight or a stupid decision). (See Appendix)
2. **Foreign Language Requirement (Area B)**. Requirement may be satisfied by completing the third year of one language in high-school with a grade-point average for third-year language of at least C (rather than B-).

We further recommend to the Admissions Committee that applicants who have completed third-year language in high school with an average grade of C be given preference for admission.

3. **Subdivisional requirements within general subject areas C, D, and F are eliminated, and a new area G is added:**

C Science, Mathematics, and Technology

Required: 3 courses (12 units)

D Social Science

Required: 3 courses (12 units)

F Arts

Required: 2 courses (8 units)

G Literature

Required: 2 courses (8 units)

4. **Restrictions by department on the number of courses used to fulfill general subject areas C,D,E,F and G are eliminated.**

Delete item 1 (p.1) of GEP Requirements brochure and item 2 (p. 81) of **General Catalog** under "General Provisions Governing All Degree Candidates' and substitute

"While fulfilling General Education Areas C,D,E,F, and G there is no restriction on the number of courses used from any single department."

5. **New procedure for appeals to receive GE credit for non-approved courses:** Student petitioners are to deal directly with the Committee on General Education.

6. **Individualized General Education Programs**

As a pilot program to be reviewed in a preliminary way after two years (from Fall 1994), we propose that eligible students be permitted to design their own general education programs, which may include courses that have not been approved as GE courses. The plans will be submitted to the Committee on General Education for approval.

The program is open to qualified students. Eligibility criteria are (1) combined SAT scores of 1200 or better; or (2) a UCSB G.P.A. of 3.5 or better; or (3) sponsorship of three faculty members from at least two different departments or programs. The plans, which must contain an explanation of how the proposed courses meet the objectives of the General Education Program, must be approved no later than the end of the sophomore year, in the case of students entering as freshmen, or no later than the end of the first year of study in the case of transfer students.

7. **The Writing Requirement - Number of courses expanded**

Writing-requirement courses (one or more papers totalling at least 1800 words), whether GE-approved or not, will be indicated independently of the GE list in the **Schedule of Classes**. The **General Education Program Requirements** brochure, in which writing-requirement courses are starred, will be advisory in listing courses that usually fulfill the requirement (but occasionally may not if instructors do not choose to offer a writing component). The quarter-by-quarter listing in the **Schedule of Classes** will be the definitive list. The footnote explaining the starred courses in the **GEPR** brochure will be: "This course usually applies toward the writing requirement. See the **Schedule of Classes** for confirmation."

The Writing Program will administer; certifying forms (prepared by the Committee on General Education) for each course will go from departments to the Director of the Writing Program, who will compile a list in advance of each quarter for the Registrar. Courses so certified for the Schedule of Classes will bear the designation: "Satisfies the writing requirement."

8. **Committee on General Education**

Membership should be expanded to make the Committee adequately representative of campus disciplines. The Chair should be allowed released time in view of the expanded role of the Committee suggested by some of our proposals (II-6 in particular), not to mention the Senate's plan to create a policy committee comprised of undergraduate committee chairs.

9. We recommend that the Executive Vice-Chancellor share with the Committee on General Education portions of departmental instruction plans (due March 15, 1994) related to GE.

III. **Start-Up Period Required**

1. **Formal Minors Initiative**

There is substantial evidence that many students would like to have the option of pursuing a minor subject the completion of which would be certified on their final transcripts and diplomas.

Preparatory to instituting formal minors--which we firmly endorse--we recommend that the Executive Committee of L & S request from departments statements of their willingness and capacity to offer formal minor programs, together with course and unit proposals for minors in their respective fields or subfields.

Whatever adjustments in GE requirements, if any, need to be made for the benefit of students electing a minor is a matter which should-be referred to the appropriate undergraduate committees at the appropriate time.

Perhaps the Executive Vice-Chancellor could encourage departments to address the question of minors in their instructional plans.

We anticipate that at least some departments could initiate minors by Fall 1994.

2. **Implementing dual reporting of grades/credit for students who fail to achieve grades on the writing component of writing-requirement courses.**

We affirm the widely shared belief that good writing is one of the most important sets of skills that a student can acquire at UCSB. In light of the high value of this objective, and the difficulties of achieving it, the requirement that students take six courses in which they write at least 1800 words is a minimal requirement, and it is unacceptable that a student who fails the writing component of a course, though performing at the passing level overall, receives writing-requirement credit in addition to unit credit. We know that this occurs. We do not know how often, but it makes no sense that it should occur at all.

We suggest, therefore, that consideration be given to practicable ways of denying writing-requirement credit in such instances.

IV. The Longer Term

General Education is necessarily an evolving program. In order to meet the on-going developmental needs of GEP, we recommend that the expanded Committee on General Education be charged with devising an organizational scheme - a "college" or "center", perhaps - in which resources for General Education can be vested. Resources could include: (a) funds to compensate departments for the temporary loan of faculty who engage in designing and teaching GE courses; (b) Teaching Assistantships; (c) internal and extramural grants for curriculum development; (d) staff; (e) a physical location in which students and faculty could meet to discuss General Education issues on a continuing basis, and where students could receive information on GE courses and advice on pursuing their individual programs.

The Committee on General Education should report their proposals to the Faculty Legislature by Spring 1995.

In our view this recommendation responds directly to concerns, findings, and recommendations contained in the Pister Report, ex-President Gardner's report on undergraduate education, and UCSB's Golledge Report.

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APPENDIX

GENERAL EDUCATION: OBJECTIVES AND DEFINITIONS

Area C. Science and Technology

Objective: To provide an understanding of the methods of science and the fundamental laws that govern the biological and physical worlds.

Area D. Social Sciences

Objective: To provide an understanding of the social, economic, and political interactions of individuals and groups. Courses should promote an awareness of (a) contemporary social, economic, and political problems and processes, (b) methods of the social and behavioral sciences, or (c) the diversity of individual and cultural perspectives brought to social encounters.

Definition: Courses should (a) cover a broad survey, (b) have no or minimal prerequisites, and (c) focus on theories and methods of studying social relationships; this can be done in a variety of contexts: e.g., the physical environment, the family, organizations, and cultures.

Area E. Civilization and Thought

Objective: To provide a perspective on civilization through the study of human history and thought.

Definition: This objective is met by courses in two categories. The first is concerned specifically with Western Civilization, presented in a historical framework, whereas the second includes both Western and non-Western cultures, together with studies of major categories of human thought approached analytically rather than historically.

Area F. The Arts and Area G. Literature

Objective: To develop an appreciation of the arts and literature by such means as historical study, analysis of master works, and aesthetically creative activity.

Definition: Each course in this area will develop at least one of the following abilities: (a) analysis of expression, form and technique in the arts or literature; (b) understanding of an exemplary figure in a broad historical or cultural context; (c) thorough comprehension of a school, period, or regional movement; (d) creative expression in literary composition, performance in the studio arts, musical composition and execution, dramatic composition and performance, or dance and choreography.