

**Report by Chair of the University-Wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) to  
University of Arizona Faculty Senate, November 4, 2024**

**Jeremy Vetter, UWGEC Chair, Associate Professor of History, [jvetter@arizona.edu](mailto:jvetter@arizona.edu)**

The University-Wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) is a shared governance body currently with 22 members, most of whom are faculty members representing Colleges that are active in teaching General Education courses, along with two student representatives, three Foundations area representatives, a library representative, and a chair appointed in consultation between the Chair of the Faculty and the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. A list of current UWGEC members can be found here: <https://ge.arizona.edu/gened-committee/uwgec-members>.

“...UWGEC's mission, as authorized by the Faculty Senate, is to review and approve all courses that satisfy General Education Requirements, periodically assess existing courses, make recommendations on policies related to General Education, and disseminate information about General Education to the campus community.”<sup>1</sup>

In the past month, UWGEC has continued to meet biweekly, reviewing and approving courses proposed for General Education. We are making some headway in clearing the backlog of courses that accumulated during the summer months, when we do not meet. I am happy to talk with any faculty who have questions or concerns about the review process, or to discuss ways that it can be improved, from a proposer's perspective.

Apart from proposal reviews, we also discuss policies and larger issues related to General Education. Our main focus lately has been the implementation of the ABOR Civic Learning requirement, as discussed in my last report. We have heard some preliminary results from the Civic Learning-Civic Knowledge (CLCK) advisory group, which was convened by the Office of General Education (OGE), and we look forward to hearing more definitive results soon, as they finish compiling the responses they have received in the weeks since the advisory group's meeting in early October. These responses mainly concern the relative merits of different models for implementing Civic Learning in the Gen Ed curriculum, as well as new ideas for models that build on, combine, or go beyond the draft models.

We are also eager to make use of the valuable data collected and helpfully presented by OGE related to students' spontaneous “completion” of the four existing attributes – Diversity & Equity, Quantitative Reasoning, Writing, and World Cultures & Societies (WCS) - since the rollout of the Gen Ed Refresh curriculum in spring 2022. While one or two of

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://ge.arizona.edu/gened-committee>.

these attributes have been required to be a significant part of every Exploring Perspectives or Building Connections course approved for the new curriculum, students are not yet required to track the completion of the expected number of courses with each attribute – two for each attribute except just one for WCS – in order to graduate. As the Fall 2026 date approaches for implementation of the attributes as graduation requirements, it is valuable to see how many courses with each attribute that students are already completing, even without being required to do so. This will inform our deliberations, and I encourage you all to read this highly valuable report, when it becomes available.

We are also anticipating a report from the ad hoc committee on General Education at this meeting, which will include some discussion of data provided in the October OGE report, tracking changes over the past five years in each college's enrollments in General Education courses (as well as suggestions of further data that could be collected), the results of an anonymous survey of advisors, and some further elaboration of potential implementation models for Civic Learning. At UWGEC, we will seek to build on the insights provided by this report and further address any concerns raised by the ad hoc committee, by collecting further data and collaborating with the faculty and staff in the Office of General Education. We will certainly need to consider and carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of all models for implementing Civic Learning, including those described by the ad hoc committee and others. I would encourage all Faculty Senators to consider the pros and cons of these models, and to ask questions and provide feedback to OGE, which I will also make sure to share with UWGEC.

Some other issues that have been explored by UWGEC this fall have included: (1) reviewing the criteria and approval process for [Success courses](#), which are not part of the Gen Ed program but have been assigned to UWGEC to review since 2010; and (2) hearing updates from the course directors of [UNIV 101](#) and [UNIV 301](#), the one-unit introduction and capstone courses that bookend the General Education curriculum, to explain how these courses are going so far, their goals, and some of the results they have achieved. We look forward to learning more, in close collaboration with the Office of General Education and the faculty who teach and supervise these courses, about how UNIV 101 and 301 are being continuously improved, adjusted, and revised in response to feedback from students, advisors, instructors, and faculty across campus.

I will close by repeating my invitation to hear from faculty across campus, including Faculty Senators, about any concerns or questions they may have about General Education, or ideas about issues we should be addressing. My email address is at the top of this report.

## **Addendum to Report, Nov. 4, 2024**

The above report was pre-circulated to all UWGEC members for comments and input last week at our meeting, after which I made a few very minor clarifications, but it was written before some unexpected late-breaking changes to the ad hoc committee report, which have been made in the past few days:

- The ad hoc committee report no longer includes any further elaboration of some potential models for Civic Learning, which were initially planned to include an extensive and detailed draft model proposed by the ad hoc Gen Ed committee's chair, which has been circulated within the committee, along with potentially at least one other model from others on the committee, all of which were initially intended to be put on the table for wider discussion but without endorsement by the full committee. While these more detailed models are not yet available, as UWGEC Chair, I am eager to see these significant elaborations of models be made public and put on the table for discussion, not only at UWGEC but across campus.
- Because some new sections of the ad hoc committee's report were only initially circulated a few days ago, I was unable to summarize these sections in my draft report above when I pre-circulated it to UWGEC last Wednesday. I cannot speak on behalf of all of UWGEC, but as the chair of this body, responsible to its members and mission, I cannot endorse unilaterally any recommendations that would restrict UWGEC from exercising its function as the authorized shared governance body to make recommendations on policies related to General Education. I will share the ad hoc committee's new report with UWGEC, for their consideration, but any decisions about when to move forward with a recommendation on any proposal(s), which may be submitted for us to review, will be determined by the collective deliberation and voting decisions of UWGEC members, and I will respect that process.
- We will, of course, be eager to receive constructive ideas and sharing of concerns from the ad hoc committee and others across campus, in relation to Civic Learning or any other part of the General Education curriculum and policies. It does certainly make sense, as noted in the ad hoc committee report, that Faculty Senate be consulted as early as possible to provide input into these important matters, even if it is officially later in the shared governance approval chain.
- Because the recommendation for an open session at faculty senate was not included in drafts available before last Wednesday's UWGEC meeting, I have not had the opportunity to seek UWGEC members' input on this yet, but I do favor this idea myself, as a way to bring everyone together with Faculty Senators to engage in a wider conversation as soon as possible. I appreciate the support for an open meeting in the ad hoc committee's report, and I hope that it will be facilitated by

faculty leadership to be inclusive of the UWGEC and the Office of General Education as well, both in participation and design of the event. I will also seek further input and guidance from UWGEC members about this valuable idea.

- While I do (speaking only for myself) also have some concerns about the framing of a few of the questions on the advisor survey, the results of which are included in this report, and which was designed before I joined the ad hoc committee, the report of the results was written judiciously and carefully by a member of the committee who is adept at interpretation of survey data, with essential input from Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Advising, Sharon Aiken-Wiesniewski. On the whole, there are many highly valuable insights in both the aggregate and free response sections of the advisor survey, and we can all appreciate the value of this candid feedback from advisors across campus. As chair of UWGEC, I have already been meeting with advising leadership to find ways to incorporate more advising input into General Education discussions at UWGEC and will continue to do so. Moreover, now that I am a member of the ad hoc committee, I will advocate that it collaborate more closely with the Office of General Education and UWGEC as well in the design and interpretation of surveys regarding Gen Ed and am ready to help facilitate this.