

General Education Committee Report to Faculty Senate Fall 2021

The General Education Committee was reconstituted in January 2020 after having been dissolved several years earlier, with the University Curriculum Committee taking on its responsibilities. The subsequent operationalizing of the restructure revealed the need to restore a permanent shared governance committee to take on the responsibility of coordinating the general education (GE) program, including being able to attend to forward-thinking and ongoing monitoring activities of the committee's work. These include revising the learning outcomes, which had been identified as problematic by both faculty submitting proposals and in accreditation reviews from our institutional accreditor in 2015 and 2020 (as the committee was pursuing its work), and initiating assessment activities for the GE program which have never been undertaken.

During the 2020-2021 time period, the General Education committee accomplished the following:

- Revised the general education learning outcomes (GELOs), successfully shepherding the changes through the full faculty senate.
- Revised and updated the GE website with the addition of supporting materials for faculty.
- Revalidated 10 courses that were slated for review by the revalidation timeline. See below.
- Approved 3 new GE courses: POLS 231 (category B), GEOL 219 (category S/G), BUSN 280 (category B)
- Removed 1 GE course (ENT 210, category S) from the GE program.
- Hosted multiple individual meetings with faculty and some department committees, which were facilitated by both Holly Hassel, committee chair, and Jeff Boyer, Director of Assessment and Accreditation.
- Revised and updated GE course proposal forms, with the continuous monitoring and gathering of feedback as we reviewed proposals to identify what information would help proposers fulfill the expectations of the GE committee and accreditation expectations for gathering evidence of program effectiveness and improvement.
- Provided representation for the institutional team participating in the HLC Assessment Academy (2020-present).
- Reviewed the existing revalidation timeline, which called for courses to be revalidated on a 5-year timeline based on year of initial submission, and revised the timeline to a 5-year cycle based on GELO categories to allow for a coherent and meaningful review of the outcomes and how effectively they are being taught, learned, and assessed. See below.
- Designed and facilitated a [Workshop: Aligning Outcomes with Assessment Measures | Jan 2021](#); materials are archived on the senate website.

Revalidated Courses:

- Communication
 - HIST 390
- Humanities & Fine Arts
 - ENGL 335 with Cultural Diversity designation
 - WGS 110 with Cultural Diversity designation
 - WGS 112 with Cultural Diversity designation
- Quantitative Reasoning

- CSCI 122
- Science & Technology
 - BIOL 111
 - CSCI 114
- Wellness
 - HNES 100
 - HNES 111
 - HNES 250

Several other courses went through an initial review for revalidation and will be resubmitting revised proposals in Fall 2021.

Other Committee Actions

Appeals for Exception to GE Administrative Policy			
<i>GE Category Exception</i>	<i># of Requests</i>	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Denied</i>
Military basic training completed for waiver of Wellness requirement	8	8	0
Sub a non-GE course into a GE category	11	5	6
International student Cultural Diversity waiver	1	1	0
Study Abroad Experience - requesting waiver of either CD or GP or both	5	3	2
Other Requests (e.g., waive ENGL 110)	6	3	3

2021-2022 Priorities

Assessment for 2021: The GE Program should be able to document the degree to which students have achieved the GELOs and use this information to improve future learning within the program. In addition, the Higher Learning Commission, NDSU's institutional accreditor, expects institutions to engage in ongoing assessment of student learning and has indicated concerns about NDSU related to assessment during its 2015 and 2020 accreditation reviews.

The GE revalidation process occurs over a 5-year period. Approximately 20% of the existing GE-approved courses across multiple GE categories have been revalidated each year. Prior to AY 2020-2021, the revalidation process did not include significant scrutiny of assessment processes embedded in GE courses. In addition, there is very little assessment information available to determine the degree to which NDSU students have achieved the GE learning outcomes.

The updated revalidation schedule (which falls under the committee’s purview, [as described in the Senate bylaws](#)) uses an outcomes-based assessment cycle so that 1 or 2 GE categories and their respective learning outcomes are revalidated each year. An outcomes-based approach helps the committee focus on a particular category of outcomes rather than diffusing focus across multiple categories. This approach helps support a continuous cycle of information gathering that can influence ongoing assessment of how the outcomes are being operationalized as well as direct revision and updating of the outcomes on a regular basis, as needed, following the process of shared governance. The table below presents the new 5-year revalidation cycle.

5-year Revalidation Cycle for General Education Outcomes

AY	GE Categories	Courses
21-22	D: A+D (31), B+D (8), R+D (1), W+D (1)	41
22-23	G: A+G (20), B+G (13), S+G (9), W+G (1)	43
23-24	A only (39) and R only (7)	46
24-25	B only (21) and C only (24)	45
25-26	S only (36) and W only (8)	44
TOTAL		219

Policy development per our updated bylaws approved in January 2020: Our efforts in the first year of the committee’s reconstitution have been focused on revising the outcomes and on faculty support and development. Per the bylaws, we’ll also need to work this year on the following: “*Develop a university policy governing the policy and procedures for general education revalidation.*”

Professional Development and Learning Outcome Assessment in Cultural Diversity: The urgency of attending to the cultural diversity learning on our campus and in our community has intensified in the past year. The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in June 2020, the successes and activism of the Black Lives Matter movement nationally and here in the local community, a series of racist and white supremacist incidents on our campus (including in Minard Hall where many of GE courses are taught in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences) also point to the significant needs we have in our campus community for putting more efforts toward greater curricular and co-curricular cultural competence work. [The Crisis Response Task Force Report](#) animates this work as well as shown in one of the report’s recommendations: “*Work with the University General Education Committee to strengthen and broaden general education offerings in cultural diversity and inclusion*” (page 7).

We’ll continue to communicate with and work flexibly and responsively with faculty and departments whose courses fall in this GE category to ensure that the workload attached with course review is not onerous, while recognizing that curricular review/management is a part of faculty responsibilities to ensure integrity and fulfill our obligations to stakeholders.

In order to further support faculty, we have begun preparing our Fall Cultural Diversity Workshop (Fall 2021), materials for which will also be archived on the website.

PREVIOUS OUTCOMES

CULTURAL DIVERSITY (D)

Diversity Learning Outcomes - students will

1. identify how values and contributions of diverse societies provide contexts for individual experiences, values, ideas, artistic expressions, and identities
2. identify the role diversity plays in the ability of biological organisms to adapt to a changing environment
3. evaluate how diverse systems (both natural and human-made), technologies, or innovations emerge from, interact with, and affect various communities
4. collaborate with others in diverse interpersonal, intercultural, or international settings

APPROVED OUTCOMES (MAY 2021)

CULTURAL DIVERSITY (D)

Diversity Learning Outcomes - students will

- 1. identify how diverse societies shape individual experiences, expressions and identities**
- 2. identify how diversity influences cultural values**
- ~~3. identify how values and contributions of diverse societies provide contexts for individual experiences, values, ideas, artistic expressions, and identities~~
- ~~4. identify the role diversity plays in the ability of biological organisms to adapt to a changing environment~~
- ~~5. evaluate how diverse systems (both natural and human-made), technologies, or innovations emerge from, interact with, and affect various communities~~
- ~~6. collaborate with others in diverse interpersonal, intercultural, or international settings~~

Additional Assessment info

During GE course revalidation (every 5 years), assessment methods and measures for the appropriate GELOs are described. The GE Committee reviews these methods and measures to ensure they align with the associated GELOs. After a semester ends, GE course instructors will report the proportion of students whose work was assessed that achieved the GELOs associated with their courses based on assessment methods and measures that are aligned with the GELOs. This information is entered into an online platform.

Committee Members

Voting members:

1. College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources: Jack Norland
2. College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences: Holly Hassel (Chair)
3. College of Business: Onnolee Nordstrom
4. College of Engineering: Pratap Kotala
5. College of Health Professions: Karla Haug
6. College of Human Sciences and Education: Nicklaus Redenius
7. College of Science and Mathematics: Clayton Hilmert
8. Undergraduate student: to be determined

Non-voting members:

1. Director of Assessment and Accreditation: Jeff Boyer
2. Office of the Registrar: RaNelle Ingalls
3. Office of Institutional Research and Analysis: Emily Berg
4. NDSU Libraries: Beth Twomey

The General Education Committee is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate with the following responsibilities:

1. Review new general education courses to ensure and validate that the general education outcomes are being met.
2. Complete the revalidation of courses and experiences on a periodic, five-year timeline to ensure that general education outcomes are being met. The course revalidation should be staggered to review approximately 20% of the general education courses each year.
3. Review General Education Appeal petitions.
4. Develop and maintain a plan for assessment of General Education Program-level learning outcomes.
5. Conduct periodic assessment of students' attainment of general education learning outcomes.
6. Develop a university policy governing the policy and procedures for general education revalidation.
7. Perform other appropriate duties as assigned by the Faculty Senate.
8. Selecting two representatives and one alternate for the North Dakota General Education Council.