FACULTY SENATE MEETING # 548
April 25, 2014
10:00 A.M. in BAB 114

Present: **Wai Mok, Chris Allport, Fan Tseng, Dan Sherman, Derrick Smith, Ryan Weber, Joe Taylor, Linda Maier, Deborah Heikes, Nick Jones, Anne Marie Choup, Bhavani Sitaraman, Mitch Berbrier, Kader Frendi, Ellise Adams, Phillip Bitzer, Luciano Matzkin, Debra Moriarity, Carmen Scholz, Richard Miller, Lingze Duan, Seyed Sadeghi, Nikolai Pogorelov**

Absent with proxy: **Christine Sears, Marlena Primeau**

Absent without proxy: **Charles Hickman, Keith Jones, Pavica Sheldon, Carolyn Sanders, Eric Seemann, R. Michael Banish, Ying-Cheng Lin, Junpeng Guo, B. Earl Wells, James Swain, James Blackmon, Jeff Evans, Kristen Herrin, Anna Benton, Peggy Hays, James Baird, Peter Slater, Letha Etzkorn, Craig Cowan, Leonard Choup,**

Guests: **Dr. Andrea Word**

➢ Faculty Senate President Mitch Berbrier called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

➢ Andrea Word

General Education Steering Committee Report
I am going to give you an overview of the work of the General Education Steering Committee. I have given you a handout with the slides. I'll just run through the steps that got us started on this process, a very brief overview of the meetings that we had and the general discussions that we had, and then go through the recommendations.
First Steps
In April 2013, CLA submitted a proposal to review the GenEd curriculum in response to the President's Request for Proposals related to the Strategic Planning Initiatives that were ongoing from 2012-2013. That Proposal was reviewed and accepted, and included in the new plan. Over the summer, the president asked if I would be willing to co-chair the committee with Brent Wren.

> Brief Background: I recently finished my dissertation on General Education Curricula at the National level. That was the focus of my doctoral dissertation in Higher Ed Administration out of UA. So I had spent quite some time going through about 20 years of the scholarship on general education trends. My focus was the period from 1990 to 2010, so the most recent round of GenEd revisions that have been going on at the national level was basically what I focused on as I was doing document research.

So I told the president that I would be delighted to co-chair the committee. Brent Wren and I were named co-chairs and in September 2013 they announced the General Education Steering Committee appointed by the president in consultation with the Faculty Senate and the Deans Council. There are about 30 members on the committee, plus the co-chairs (see Appendix A). There was representation across all colleges. We had a couple of people from Student Affairs, Alan Constant, who is head of the Student Success Center, and Susan Steen, who is the Director of the

Office of International Engagement. We also had representation from Faculty Senate (the asterisk represents members from the Faculty Senate who were also on the steering committee). September 2013 to March 2014, the Committee met several times to discuss the GenEd curriculum.

Meeting 1

In our first meeting in September, when you look at the outline of the Plan of Action from subsequent meetings, we began with a discussion of conceptual framework. Rather than beginning with the courses that existed, we first began with the discussion of what "Mission" of GenEd should mean, what the conceptual drivers and purpose of GenEd should be, and let that inform all of the subsequent discussions. We also started with a list of guiding principles, and among those we promised ourselves that we would consider inclusion of the current GenEd courses. There was no feeling at the beginning of the process that we were going to blow up the curriculum and start all over; there was no desire to do that. We felt like it's been 20-25 years since the GenEd has been reviewed as a curriculum and there's no purpose in going in and trying to do a massive upheaval of the structure. We did want to look at where we could strengthen the curriculum based on what currently is in place, and then fill gaps where we saw them.

Meeting 2

We really focused on the conceptual framework. We wanted to tie it to the Mission and Vision Values in the Strategic Plan so that it would be a coherent reflection of the university as a whole. We also looked at lists of core competencies that we thought were essential for engagement in the 21st century context.

Meeting 3

Expanded on our discussions of the conceptual framework commission and also began to consider issues of the current structure. We generated lists of competencies that are desirable in a 21st century educated university student, specifically at UAH. Then, we considered how those competencies were being addressed through the current GenEd courses. At the end of meeting 3, it became clear that it would be helpful for the members of the committee to talk with representatives of all of the departments that serve within the GenEd now. So we invited the chairs, or their representatives, of each GenEd Department (English, History, Philosophy, Economics, etc.) to come and meet with the committee at large to have an opportunity for small group, face to face discussion regarding what goes on in courses of the GenEd currently. I think among committee members, average time out for freshmen experience would have been about 20 years, so we thought it might behoove us to go talk to the professors teaching these classes in realizing that the French class we would have taken 20 years ago is probably not the French class currently in place, or the history or the literature.

- o Richard Miller: When you say the committee met with representatives from each department, are they the people that were on your committee?
- o Andrea Word: The full committee met with all of the Chairs of the departments. Up to this point the full committee had met, all 30 members in one room, and talked amongst each other. They did small teams inside the committee at each meeting.

Meeting 4

22 department chairs, or their representatives in some cases (because 22 departments serve the GenEd right now) came to this meeting with the 30 members of committee. Then the chairs of each department broke out into rooms, sorted by area. So all of the Humanists and Fine Arts people were in one room; the Social Behavioral Scientists were in one room; the Natural Science and Math representative were in one room; and then we had Women's Studies, Global Studies, Freshmen Comp in a room. Subgroups of the committee rotated through all 4 rooms. It took us 2 hours. They

got to spend 15-20 minutes with each group. Groups of 10 committee members talking with groups of 4 or 5 representatives in each room.
- o Richard Miller: When was meeting 4? Who were the representatives?
- o Andrea Word: Meeting 4 was early November 2013.

Before the committee met with the department representatives, the department chairs submitted a brief overview of what their department was currently doing in regards to the GeneEd (i.e., what the courses were that they contributed, what those courses included, and then what the overall purpose they saw in their contributions to the GenEd). I believe it was clear that this was not intended as a request for a defense of courses inclusion at any point. It was more of we don't know what's going on and before we consider how contributions are made by each department, we need to know what's going on. No so much "do you belong?" as "what are you contributing?" because we assume you belong.

Meeting 5
Meeting 5 was in December before the break. We reviewed the semester's work, looked at the emerging conceptual framework and compared it against the current courses as we now understood them.

Interim
In the interim period between meetings 5 and 6, this was over winter break, I went out before the committee and talked with the full group of college advisors, the registrar, recruitment and admissions personnel, as well as the head of the Student Success Center, Alan Constant, who was on the committee to find out the procedural and policy framework that we have in place for communicating about GenEd currently (for making recommendations regarding GenEd when we are advising undergrads and the general flow in messaging that centers around General Education currently at the institution). I met with all of them.

Meeting 6
Meeting 6 was in early February, where I gave the committee the report on Procedures and Policies, based on those discussions, we discussed the findings to-date, and then we had subgroups appointed within the committee to volunteer to draft the recommendations. We had a couple of subgroups. One subgroup had to have 2 different meetings because we couldn't get them all together in one room at one time.

From March to April 2014 the subcommittees met and drafted the recommendations. We sent the recommendations out to the committee for a vote, took that vote and those responses into consideration and drafted a 2nd version of the recommendations, and then sent that back out. We had 2 final full committee meetings, because we all couldn't get into the same room again at the same time. Then there was a third draft and revision process. Final recommendations were agreed upon on April 19, 2014. Are there any questions about how this played out or regarding any of the points made so far? The next step is to explain the recommendations one by one.
- o Richard Miller: These are recommendations to the President?
- o Andrea Word: Yes, and now to the Provost.
- o Richard Miller: Perhaps this is the reason for presenting it in front of us today, but will there be some kind of comment period by faculty?
- o Andrea Word: I think one of the goals today is to find out what you all would recommend as far as how that might play out. The President and the Provost have seen the recommendations. They are not making decisions on them but they have seen the final draft as you are today. One of the awkward parts of this process has been that we did not have a

Provost through the process—not because the President and Dr. Wren couldn't guide us, but because when you have a Provost entering the picture, presumably they're going to have strong feelings about how this plays out.

- o Richard Miller: I'm not bringing this up to throw a wrench in things—I'm really looking forward to seeing your recommendations and I think this is a great task—I know in our department, the representative on the committee, there's been no communication with the faculty in the department regarding the recommendations, or asking if we have inputs or suggestions. So from that perspective it's not involving anyone from outside.
- o Andrea Word: I think that varies across departments and colleges whether people report back or not. To the extent that this can serve as the beginning of the distribution campus-wide, I think that can be one goal that might come out of this today.
- o Mitch Berbrier: It was a very big committee representative of all faculty. Our position as faculty senators is that any major change has to go through Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.
- o Andrea Word: As we go through the recommendations, I think you all will see the level at which these recommendations are being made is much more macro-level. Pending the arrival of the Provost and an understanding of how undergrad education and everything will be moving forward, and the undergraduate curriculum will be moving forward, I think that we stayed at a relatively macro level for that very reason.

The Mission
It encompasses a lot of information. The choice of adjectives was challenging. The choice of nouns was challenging.
The mission of the general education core at UAH is to prepare individuals to be successful, capable, responsible, and ethical in their roles as students, professionals, citizens, and leaders.
We can't really take any of the words out because all of this needs to be part of what the GenEd is conceptualized as doing. It does not serve a narrow focus in the educational experience, and that was the point.

Recommendations
Recommendation 1: We recommend that all colleges* adhere to a CONSISTENT CORE distributed across Areas I-IV as follows.
Recommendation 1 is the sticking point, and has been from the beginning as far as structure goes. Area I is freshmen comp. Area II includes fine arts, humanities, and within humanities, specifically literature, which is mandatory. Area III includes mathematics and natural sciences. Area IV is history and social behavioral sciences. This is based on the Alabama General Studies Committee, which divided the content and disciplines into these areas. There is an Area V; it is typically reserved for pre-major and other courses that colleges may want to require of their undergraduates in preparation for degree programs.
We recommend that everyone follow this common core of distribution. *This common core works for everyone other than the College of Engineering. The College of Engineering does not require 12 hours in Areas II and IV. The challenge that they face will be to come back up to 9 hours in Area II. There will be some discussion on how that has to happen. Engineering, across the state of Alabama, is allowed a dispensation of 3 hours in Area II and 3 hours in Area IV. The committee doesn't believe that it's a good idea to exercise that dispensation; however, we recognize that it's a state level allowance, and that the College of Engineering can decide to do it.

- o Mitch Berbrier: I would like to add that part of the original impetus for this was President/Provost Altenkirch wanted to have consistency across the colleges.
- o Andrea Word: It doesn't originate with the committee, but we did interrogate that question. The President would like to ease transfer both into the University and within the University,

and to that end he would like to have a common core. He would also like to achieve transparency and simplicity in communication with students and their parents. So he believed that it would be really nice to have a table that was easily read and understood by people coming in from outside. So, it will require shifting around of tables that are currently published on the website. Not eliminating things from the table, but relocating the placement of them. I know that there have been some concerns expressed with the confusion over what the implications of this structure would be. Essentially, the content of each area is not being changed; it's simply being streamlined in terms of its placement on the table. Not suggesting eliminating certain courses; only pushing them below the common core where it's appropriate.

- o Bhavani Sitaraman: So will this be the standard for all colleges?
- o Andrea Word: Yes.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: And Area V will now have some restrictions, right? So for example, in Liberal Arts, of these 23 hours, x hours will be in Foreign Language.
- o Andrea Word: Yes. Area V was traditionally intended for this purpose. It will be 19-25 hours, depending on how many total hours you allocate to the lower division portion. But it will be separated out so that it is very clear what is required to meet the GenEd versus what is required to meet other college or departmental requirements.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: There's no requirement for the total number of hours, overall?
- o Andrea Word: It's varied depending on the degree, but 56 to 64 is the max that is allowable and that's assuming a 128-hour degree.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: Is there a minimum requirement?
- o Andrea Word: I think that there's a minimum you can work out depending on the total number of degree hours while simultaneously considering SACS constraints and AGSC constraints. I think the minimum would typically be around 55 hours for the total GenEd, Areas I through IV plus V. This is around 41-42 hours, depending on if the student is on honors instead of the 2 freshmen comp, do they take a 4-hour math instead of a 3, etc.? So that varies. What we were interested in talking about was the distribution across the areas rather than the total number. We started with the total number. The President's magic number was 41 hours allocated to this. But then there was some considerable concern because 3 doesn't divide evenly into 41, and we realized that in the end the point is the distribution because the point is to have students exposed to the areas of knowledge and perspective represented across the areas—so not how many hours total, but which kind of hours? That's why we really focused on the distribution of hours across.

- o Molly Johnson: Is this the same for native and transfer students?
- o Andrea Word: Yes.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the UAH general education core (Areas I-IV) be RENAMED to: (a) distinguish the courses from Area V courses, and (b) reflect its position as the core of a cohesive and coherent undergraduate curriculum.

The second recommendation is that we rename "Areas I through IV" to reflect its function and position within the undergrad curriculum. So we are recommending that it be renamed because GER is really not that productive. It's often confused with GRE and GED. So we are interested in looking at a renaming of the core. Maybe an acronym that comprises a group of verbs or nouns or a word, it's hard to find a word.

- o Why not just "the core"?
- o Andrea Word: We thought about that.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that the courses of the UAH GER be mapped out on a COMPETENCIES-ORIENTED MATRIX indicating the relationships among the courses across Areas I-IV, their curricular objectives, and associated student learning outcomes.
We would like to see the courses of the GenEd mapped out on a matrix, much along the lines like Engineering and Business already do.
Recommendation 3a: We recommend that a set of CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES tied to the competencies matrix be formalized to ensure coherence and cohesion of experience and learning across Areas I-IV of the UAH GER.
Recommendation 3b: We recommend that a related set of student LEARNING OUTCOMES be identified and mapped to the courses eligible for inclusion with Areas I-IV of the UAH GER.
Competencies with associated curricular objectives followed by appropriate student learning outcomes. This wouldn't be a top-down process. We would like to have the student learning outcomes generated from a collection of student learning outcomes that currently exist in the GenEd courses, and consider the competencies that were developed in initial discussions among the members of the committee and begin to map these together to ensure that the competencies we would like to see in our students are being met through student learning outcomes in specific courses. Then tie that together so that we have curricular objectives that will make the entire GenEd part of the curriculum a coherent structure for students that you can communicate about. So not saying, "you have to take Area I," or, "you have to take Area II," but saying, "this course contributes to your development of critical thinking," and, "this course is developing your critical communication skills." So we begin to stop talking about Areas I-IV as what's being met, and we start talking about the course contribution to the competencies that we hope the students will develop through this experience.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that all colleges DEVELOP COURSES to be included in the gen-ed curriculum.
There are challenges of course in developing courses for the GenEd because we are constrained by these Areas I through IV at the state level so any courses developed will have to fit into one of those pre-defined areas. But that's not to say that it can't be done. Both Nursing and Engineering expressed interest in developing courses that would be submitted for approval as GenEd. There are credential issues and being able to meet placement in Area II or Area IV. If in Area IV, you will need faculty credential to meet the delivery of a social behavioral science course, for example. Some considerations that were raised were possibilities of inter-disciplinary collaboration, so Engineering collaborating with one of the Social Science departments to develop courses. Those kinds of cross college and cross departmental collaborations that would allow people to develop some innovative inter-disciplinary courses.
Recommendation 4a: We further recommend that all colleges and departments pursue development of INNOVATIVE general education courses reflecting the vibrant and complex relationships among arenas of knowledge in the 21st century and that such course development and innovation be supported through appropriate funding and professional reward mechanisms reflecting institutional commitment to and valuing of the general education core of the undergraduate curriculum.
We are looking for innovation and interdisciplinary as courses rolled out in the future.
- o Mitch Berbrier: Would it be useful to think about those Nursing and Engineering collaborative courses as STS minor for a vehicle for that?
- o Andrea Word: That came up as a discussion. The STS in Philosophy and Sociology were used as examples of the kinds of courses that could be developed. That notion of tying these things together and figuring out how to make that work. Ironically, Engineering, Nursing, and Education are not represented in the GenEd. Professions in general are not represented, with the exception of Art and Music, in these lower-division course offerings. It seems

appropriate that since we are going to try approach the GenEd as a UAH construct, then we would be including some offerings relating to Engineering, Nursing, Healthcare, etc.

- o Nick Jones: The dean at the time I was hired told me that not only do Liberal Arts not get course releases for research grants, but they also do not get course releases for course development. Is that what that "appropriate funding and professional reward mechanisms" addresses?
- o Andrea Word: Yes. The rationale for that isn't included on here, but for this it is that the development of these kinds of courses and that kind of innovation absolutely requires appropriate funding. If a faculty member wants to develop an innovative course, that faculty member might have the resources in their situation, but that's not the case for everyone. So in order to make it possible for everyone to have an opportunity to do this, we need to put funding in place. Depending on how this is delivered, we also, in the rationale, noted that there also has to be appropriate reward mechanisms in terms of recognizing that contribution, in terms of tenure and promotion. If we are going to move towards revitalizing GenEd, then there has to be recognition of that contribution of service to the institution.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that coherent, cohesive, and positive MESSAGING be created and coordinated through recruitment, admissions, the Student Success Center, the course catalog, and advising to reflect the functions of the core.
Coherent, cohesive, and positive messaging be established across the campus. This isn't necessarily the case. A lot of times GenEd is referred to as a checkbox, as an area requirement, as something to be gotten out of the way. It was used as bulk filler in the curriculum so when colleges and departments outline their plan of study for their students, they typically fill in the gaps with GenEd rather than thinking of GenEd as having to be co-constructed as a curricular experience at the same time as the degree experience. We would really like to see coherent, positive messaging and a lot more coherence in a way that everyone envisions GenEd in its contribution.

Recommendation 6: We recommend that academic ADVISORS across the university receive continuous professional development and updates regarding the informational, relational, and contextual aspects of the general education curriculum and its offerings.
Academic advisors across the university receive professional development and updates on the aspects of the curriculum and its offerings. This is something that is not done in a consistent manner for the advisors right now. When I talked with them, they were very excited at the opportunity to have GenEd become something other than the checkbox system. They said it's a little bit depressing interacting with students who basically are trying to get this stuff out of the way. But that message has been reinforced over and over again. When I talked to the recruiters they said nobody ever asks about GenEd—it's not important. I made the point that perhaps they could talk about GenEd rather than waiting for questions. So if you have it as a coherent structure, they can start selling it as part of the gateway into UAH and the support system that we have put in place to ensure the success of the students in their academic programs.

Recommendation 7: We recommend that P/F be ELIMINATED as an option in grading for courses taken to fulfill Area I-IV requirements in the GER.
We recommended that /PF be eliminated as an option for courses that fulfill the GenEd requirements. [Applause.] 12 hours of P/F are allowed. As I recall: Nursing doesn't allow P/F for anything and Business allows it for only free electives; there's a lot of diversity across the colleges on this. It feels like Business restricts it to free electives, but I can't remember for sure.

- o Dan Sherman: You can't take Pass/Fail within the college, within the Business courses.
- o Andrea Word: Right. No one allows P/F for minor or major.

- o Dan Sherman: We do have a GPA requirement for your GER. So that creates a problem for P/F

So a couple of colleges, really not those 2, may allow the use of P/F for GER course fulfillment (for example, for 12 hours for a 15 hour requirement). So essentially you have students who may be, for example, would only have to get 60% in 4 of the 5 GenEd courses.

- o Richard Miller: I think this is awesome. Is the reason for this recommendation in effect to put pressure on students to take these courses seriously?
- o Andrea Word: It sends the message. The goal was to send a message that this curricular component matters.
- o Richard Miller: It looked like you were surprised that we were supportive of this.
- o Andrea Word: I'm not surprised so much that you're supportive, but there was a lot of conversation about it. There were a lot of concerns expressed. One was, what will the impact be on students deciding to take, or not to take, these classes at the institution, and rather to go over to Calhoun and transfer them in. However, UA, UAB, and Auburn refuse to accept P/F transfers. So they won't allow the transfer in of P/F grades. As far as I can tell, we don't allow P/F transfers to come in.
- o Richard Miller: So even a course that there's reciprocity, if it's P/F, we don't allow it?
- o Andrea Word: Right. It must come in as a grade. All P/F grades here have a grade behind them. The registrar can recover what that original letter grade was. As long as we can communicate clearly that this is not a change in reality for the students, I don't think we will lose any of the population. I think we've lost as much population as we are going to lose.
- o Deb Moriarity: And as we get this block tuition going, we will get some of the students back because it will be cheaper for them to stay here.
- o Mitch Berbrier: I think it will be more important for us to project the image of a place that takes education seriously and in the long run that will help us get more students.
- o Andrea Word: My response when there were some questions raised about that in a discussion: we need to do the right thing. It's great that Auburn, UA, and UAB do not accept transfer P/Fs and we can say that our peers are following the same policy and procedures, but the bottom line is that we need to do the right thing. If we are going to start to roll out a new image (we have the new website coming out and the VPSA that is coming in place), if we are going to position ourselves on the market, then we need to position strongly. I think at some point we should stop worrying about these kinds of potential problems. You can't really sell a value added to GenEd if you don't hold their feet to the fire when they're in classes.

Recommendation 8: Whereas the conceptual, structural, and procedural changes recommended above entail a long-term perspective on the design and evaluation of a significant portion of the undergraduate curricular experience, and whereas there is currently no university-level unit or structure that is or would readily be able to coordinate and guide the work outlined above, we recommend the immediate establishment of a UNIT dedicated to coordination and evaluation of procedures, policies, and evaluation of the GER courses, the GER curriculum, and the GER program itself, and that such an entity be housed within Academic Affairs.

Whereas all of the other stuff, we recommend a unit be established to coordinate, organize, communicate, and consolidate procedures and policies related to GenEd. We do not currently have in place at the institution a unit that is responsible for the oversight of GenEd, which is why we ended up with the GenEd we have now, and why we ended up with the messaging we have now, and why we ended up with the checkbox mentality that we have. So whereas we recommend all of these other things we've done, we recommend that someone be assigned to do it.

- o Derrick Smith: Is it common at other universities to have a specific unit that does that?

- o Andrea Word: It is. For those that have done a revision since 1995. Portland State's revision of 1995 really marked the beginning of the latest stage of revisions nationally. This is a very tip-of-the-iceberg beginning of a revision of a GenEd. What we have here is very basic foundational beginning.

There are a breadth of models to choose from as we move forward. We wanted to make sure that we locked down procedures and conceptual frameworks that will inform decisions as we go forward with GenEd into the future at the University. Rather than try to lock it all down now, we really wanted to get the conceptual stuff in place so that decision-making will be reasoned and logical moving forward.
- o Richard Miller: So playing devil's advocate, I can already hear the faculty voices saying this is another increase in the size of administration with the creation of a unit and personnel. You say unit there as opposed to a person, is this an Associate Provost?
- o Andrea Word: So these are the questions that have come out. "Why can't the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee do it?" Because it's beyond just curricula, in terms of the communication and ongoing policy and procedural work that has to be done behind the scenes. It in no way navigates around the Committee; there's no purpose in that. That was a concern. This is a unit that is coordinating and organizing and advisory. It's not a unit that would be oversight. The outcomes generate out of departments. The unit, committee, person, whatever it ends up being (we couldn't decide what it should/would look like—there were multiple ideas and examples, i.e. faculty committee, Associate Provost, Dean).
- o Richard Miller: So unit doesn't mean an academic unit?
- o Andrea Word: No.
- o Deb: We envisioned it more as having faculty involved in this. That's one of the models at places—a faculty committee. One of the things to do, as these new courses are proposed for the GER, is determine if it meets GER requirements? Does it fit? We felt that was really more something that would be within this unit. Once it said it fit, then it would go to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for the typical kinds of review done there.
- o Richard Miller: I was confused by the word "unit."
- o Andrea Word: It's not a good word, but unit was a catch-all term. Is it an office, a committee, a combination, one person? That was a discussion and it really has not been decided. Do you guys have some thoughts on what it might look like or the pros and cons of different structures? That would be helpful.
- o Deb Moriarity: We definitely want it to have faculty involvement because faculty are in charge of the curricula. So I don't envision it as hiring an outside administrative person.
- o Mitch Berbrier: I can't imagine that's a full-time job.
- o Deb Moriarity: No. Something like Chair of the General Education Committee as a major service job with other faculty involved.
- o Andrea Word: The work in the short term is going to be very different than the work in the long term of the committee. With SACS coming back, they're coming back looking at GenEd. They're going to want to know that there is a coherent plan in place and a policy of procedures for evaluation. Since the last time they were here, SACS has expanded their interests in GenEd and their expectations for accountability. They're beginning to look at the curriculum in the undergrad level in much the way that the professional organizations look at the curriculum in the professional colleges.

- o Derrick Smith: What is the timeline? When is it going to go in effect?
- o Andrea Word: The President and the Provost have seen it. What they decide to do at the next stage is something that will be determined after this discussion today. They wanted to

see the Faculty Senate's feeling about the recommendations and get a feeling of how you think this looks and if there were any significant concerns with what we are recommending, suggestions on how this might play out favorably or effectively.

- o Richard Miller: One critical thing that I think Nick hit on was the creation of new and relevant GenEd courses, which can be cross-discipline or doing something innovative. In a lot of colleges and departments, we are very bare bones on personnel and available opportunities to do something new, and doing something new takes time. So some formal mechanism for either course release or something that enables us to have people step up to do these innovative things is needed. I think without that, there's pressure on the status quo or covering what we are already doing that there's going to be really limited development of new things. And I think those new things can really help with recruitment and retention and stuff. So I think there's a catch 22 here. There's going to have to be some kind of commitment at the university and college level to really make sure that happens.
- o Andrea Word: With the notion of the unit comes the need for some teeth in the unit in order to make sure that things go forward and continue to progress in light of all of the other priorities that are going on at the institution. One of the things that would have to be addressed by the unit is exactly what is the composition and how does the reward take place?

- o Bhavani Sitaraman: I understand the concept of new interdisciplinary courses, but something like Women's Studies is taught under the code WS, but is taught by people in other existing departments, like Sociology, History, etc. So I'm curious where these things get housed? Is it a Humanities course? Is it a Social Science course? Where is it going to end up?
- o Andrea Word: It's very interesting. One of the things I was thinking about is the notion of Women's Studies as a model for interdisciplinary and we talked about the fact that Women's Studies can count in Area II and Area IV. I assume it's by whoever is teaching it.
- o Molly Johnson: It's classified as Humanities.
- o Andrea Word: We have it as Area IV as well.
- o Molly Johnson: It really is both because regardless who is teaching it, we have a commitment to bringing in different disciplines, guest lecturers—we have Nursing faculty coming in now.
- o Andrea Word: I think you need that notion of something like Women's Studies or Global Studies, where you have some flexibility. Knowledge and content is being reorganized across historic disciplinary boundaries. We are moving outside that in many ways.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: I understand that, but what I am trying to figure out is with your boxes, the four core categories, where will some of these new things end up? Will they have a fixed designation like STS, which will always be in Area IV? Or will they be in flux?
- o Deb Moriarity: I think the idea was that you propose to go into a specific area and this unit would review it for that area. It's possible that you might have one that covers competencies that fit across, but does it hit the key competencies? That's why we want to get away from these "Area I, II, III, IV" designations, and define them as the "key competencies" in those areas.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: Wouldn't it depend on who is teaching it?
- o Deb Moriarity: It shouldn't. It depends on the course content.

To the students and the parents, it can be a Competencies table or it can be an Area table. The President wants the Area table to be simple. Not everything needs to be covered in this Area table, such as courses specific to colleges and departments. We did categorical coherence, not course-specific coherence (so we didn't pick Math 112 for everyone). We can't pick one course that

will do it for everybody given the diversity of our programs and the diversity of our students. So the Area table has to be cross-mapped to the Competencies table, which then has to back build to the curricular objectives through the student learning outcomes and the courses themselves.

At one point in our discussions, we had this notion of would it be helpful to tag courses? So once we know what the competencies are, there are going to be courses that could be Area II or Area IV that would meet, for example, the diversity perspectives or that would meet the need for historical perspective. So the competencies will help the students begin to understand why they are taking a course beyond simply checking it off or because his/her advisor told them to. We want to create a narrative through the competencies, but it always has to map to the Areas. So figuring out how these new courses map will be a process as we go through it.

- o Mitch Berbrier: And having a unit to guide that is helpful.

- o Deborah Heikes: The one concern I have is that this unit has some constancy to it so it's not like some Faculty Senate committee where you might have all new members every year. You need at least one person running the committee year to year overseeing this so there's some coherence and unity to the whole process.
- o Andrea Word: That's the notion of the chair or director. At really large institutions, there is a Dean of the University College, which is the lower-division that borrows faculty from departments to teach there and that curricula is coordinated and those faculty flow in and out from the different departments. But we aren't big enough to do that. So something like a constant person or a couple of people and then faculty-appointed probably. I'm not sure if it will be elected or appointed because this is a specific skill set in a way that ties to curricular development and education and learning and cognition.
- o Deborah Heikes: That's why I'm concerned that the unit doesn't turn out to be something where people are dumped into it one year and the next year there's a whole new group of different people.

- o Nick Jones: Part of the mission is to prepare students to be ethical in their various roles. I get that, but what does that mean?
- o Andrea Word: The Areas are grouped by competencies and they originate out of the learning outcomes.
- o Nick Jones: Is there a requirement for a course to be Intro to Ethics?
- o Andrea Word: You have to demonstrate that you develop ethical understanding and perspective through the GenEd. It doesn't have to happen only through Intro to Ethics, it can happen in other courses. The Mission drives all of the competencies and student learning outcomes together. The Mission is very generic in a sense because it was hard to go down to a lower level or a more specific level of description, so those are the words that we ended up with.
- o Deb Moriarity: The mention of ethics in the Mission doesn't specifically mean that the student has to take an Ethics course, but as we look at the courses that are there, is there a component in this area and this area in these courses that addresses looking at decisions that are considered ethical versus not ethical. You might see some of that in History, you might see some of it in Sociology, you would probably see some of it in Science.

- o Andrea Word: So what do you guys think should be the next step with the recommendations? The Provost will have them, but do you guys have any thoughts on dissemination to the campus?
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: I'm trying to reconcile some concerns that I've heard. I've heard things like some units might be reducing the number of History courses.

- o Andrea Word: They already have.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: That's factored into this?
- o Andrea Word: Engineering now has collapsed Areas II and IV into one block within their curriculum in their POSes, and is a total of 15 hours, which means 6 and 9. All other colleges keep Areas I through IV separated out. Engineering has collapsed Areas II and IV, which is basically CLA, for a total of 15 hours, rather than 24 hours. So students are required to take a total of 15 hours over Areas II and IV. That has reduced the number of courses that need to be taken through CLA, and constrained it in such a way, as I understand it and read it, that a student could get out without History, without Literature, and with a sequence of Theater.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: If this will be across the University, how will that…?
- o Andrea Word: Those conversations are taking place.
- o Richard Miller: Either the University values the General Education or they don't.

Everybody has to adhere to either a sequence in History or Literature. That also had fallen by the wayside in the case of Engineering. So you can, right now, have 2 Sociology classes, or 2 Philosophy classes, and count it as a sequence in Engineering. That was one of the obstacles.
- o Bhavani Sitaraman: What percentage of our student body graduates with an Engineering degree?
- o Andrea Word: Last time I heard it was about 30-something percent; about 1/3.
- o Mitch Berbrier: I thought we were required by AGSC, in other words by the state, to have a literature or a history sequence. Where did that come from in the first place?
- o Andrea Word: That comes from AGSC. The tradition of having a sequence in one or the other has been in place for decades. AGSC, I think, confirms that, because I see it all over their site. In essence, AGSC tells 4-years what they have to take from 2-years, but it doesn't tell 4-years what they have to do. SACS says we have to have 30 minimum core. And you have to have comp, humanities, which doesn't include for SACS Foreign Language or Speech; you must have a math, a natural science, and a social behavior. So they only specify 15 of the 30 hours and they don't require more than 30 at the minimum. So the question is, do we really want to go for the minimum? So that's why in all of the considerations of the constraints from SACS and AGSC, transfer considerations, desire to get students in, desire not to have them run away to other institutions to take the GenEd and transfer, we came to the 41ish total hours Areas I through IV.

- o Richard Miller: You asked what comes next. This is my two-cents. We've heard misinformation relative to what you've shown. My recommendation would be that this be distributed in some form to the faculty at large just to minimize any miscommunication. Personally, I think this is great. Then, to minimize the can of worms that can be opened by sending it to everyone, recommend that if somebody has comments, that they talk to their Faculty Senate representative and that person can funnel comments to you. I would just hate for 300 faculty to start pouring comments or questions to you so elected representatives will simplify that. There's often misinformation around and some of us have tried to interfere with that, but by distributing this you can minimize that.
- o Andrea Word: Does anything on here reinforce concerns that have been expressed or does it alleviate them?
- o Deborah Heikes: I love the simplicity of this system. I've never understood our GER and I always figured that if I can't understand it then our students probably can't either.
- o Andrea Word: And if they can't understand it, then how can they value it?
- o Richard Miller: The only one that's not on there, and that is the source of most misinformation that I've heard from people, is that there's this mandate that you have to get

to 120 hours and no more. I've been told from the source that's not true. That is what, for some reason, a lot of people are hearing.

- o Andrea Word: The state of Tennessee went to 120 hours for all degrees. They just made 2-year education free in the state of Tennessee. It passed either last week or the week before. They're funding it out of the lottery. My understanding is that all 2-year courses will be offered for free.
- o Molly Johnson: What does that mean for the 4-year universities?
- o Andrea Word: I don't know what happens to them, but I'm concerned about that. We also have 9 counties to the north of us in Tennessee that produce about 10% of our incoming population.
- o Richard Miller: So you are saying that we are moving to that?
- o Andrea Word: No, I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that all of these changes around reinforce the concern, regardless of what happens internally. You have all of these external pressures pushing down on Alabama. Alabama can take these kinds of positions at the state legislature level because they do, and we see how that turns out. Any time anyone has mentioned this in the last year, the message is no. If you want to, you can, but if you don't, that's fine.
- o Mitch Berbrier: Once one department in the University does it, all will feel pressured.
- o Andrea Word: And then you have the internal pressure.
- o Mitch Berbrier: If you have any questions, you can email Andrea, but I would suggest that if there are any questions that it gets distributed through the Department Chairs or the Faculty Senators.
- o Andrea Word: Might set up an online forum.

> Faculty Senate Bill 376

We've seen this bill already. This Bill is a revision of a resolution from last year. There are a series of preamble statements ("Whereas"). We had a vote on it already, but Dr. Sheldon had a question after the call to question so there was some confusion that the question hadn't been called so it violated the procedure. Everyone needs to realize that the question has been called. So we're having a third vote.
Phillip Bitzer motions to discuss.
[Mitch Berbrier reads the bill]
Wai Mok: Pavica told me she wanted the option to opt out.
Richard Miller: I don't think you're forced to take leave.
Bhavani Sitaraman: I think that's misinterpreted. It's not something we can change now.
Mitch Berbrier: Her concern was not about opting out of the parental leave, but if you opt in to the parental leave, it says something about your tenure clock is automatically adjusted and she wanted to be able to opt out of the automatic extension.
Wai Mok: She doesn't want that automatic extension.
Mitch Berbrier: It's up to you to vote to accept that at this point or not, but I think last time we decided it would be better to amend that as soon as this new section of the Faculty Handbook is approved.
Bhavani Sitaraman: I think if we don't at least pass this bill, we won't have anything. Right now this is buried in a handbook.
Deborah Heikes: I think it depends on your Dean right now.
Molly Johnson: It's very inconsistent. It varies by college.

Phillip Bitzer calls to question. Kader Frendi seconds.
In favor? Aye.
No opposition.
Bill passes.

➢ Senate Bill 378

Deb Moriarity <u>motions to consider</u>. Nick Pogorelov seconds.
The purpose of this bill, from our perspective, is to ensure that in the uncommon situation that we are hiring a new administrator -- usually an administrator -- but it could be anyone, and they have tenure at their home institution and we have a week to hire them or 2 weeks before they're hired by someone else, we want to make sure that the process is in place. That all of the faculty committees get to review the application for tenure, those being the college-level PTAC committee and URB and the department, but at the same time understanding that this is an expedited process so you don't have a full dossier.
[Mitch Berbrier reads the bill]
Bhavani Sitaraman: I have 2 recommendations. One is that this needs to be amended to indicate that this is for people coming in with tenure from a previous institution. There's nowhere here that says that tenure is being—so it doesn't apply to someone who comes in from an industry who has never taught in a classroom. It needs to clarify. I think this should be restricted, if making a decision in 5 days based on an application and clearly it's an academic who has come to teach.
Mitch Berbrier: If there's a problem, wouldn't the recommendation be not to tenure them?
Richard Miller: There's due diligence for people who don't currently have tenure. None of us are reviewed for tenure in 5 days.
Mitch Berbrier: Isn't that covered by this in a sense that the person would be rejected?
Bhavani Sitaraman: No. I think in the past there's been pressure to process it with the assumption that we are eager to recruit someone.
Mitch Berbrier: But if we restrict this to just people who are already tenured, then there's no process for those who aren't and they can do whatever they want with those.
Bhavani Sitaraman: We can make it conditional. I've looked at some universities that give a conditional upon the review within the first year.
Mitch Berbrier: But that's my point. We would have to have a policy set in place for people who don't have tenure.
Richard Miller: What Bhavani is saying really only applies to chairs. People above the chair level are prohibited from being granted tenure when they're hired into a job if they did not already have tenure. It's Board Rule 301 or 305.
Bhavani Sitaraman: It needs to be amended.

Lost quorum at 11:30 am.

<div align="center">
Faculty Senate Meeting # 548 ended
April 25, 2013, 11:30 A.M.
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General Education Steering Committee

Summative Overview prepared for Faculty Senate

First steps…

- **April 2013: CLA submits p**roposal to review the general education curriculum in response to the president's RFP regarding Strategic Initiatives at UAH.

- **September 2013:** Announcement of the General Education Steering Committee, appointed by President Altenkirch in consultation with the Deans Council and Faculty Senate President

Business Administration
John Burnett (FIN)
Dan Sherman (MGT)*
Chris Allport (ACC)*
David Allen (ECN)
Yeqing Bao (Assoc Dean; MKT)

Engineering
Kader Frendi (MAE)*
Jennifer English (Assoc Dean; ECE)
Phil Farrington (ISE)
CP Chen (CHE)
Houssam Toutanji (CCE)

Liberal Arts
Jodi Price (PY)
Laurel Bollinger (EH)
Christine Sears (HY)*
Andy Cling (Assoc Dean; PHL)
Beth Quick (ED)
Linda Maier (FL)*
David Ragsdale (MU)

Science
Dan Rochowiak (Assoc Dean)
Rob Griffin (ESS)
Carmen Scholz (CH)*
Shelley Lenahan (MA)
Lingze Duan (PH)*
Deb Moriarity (BYS)*

Nursing
Rita Ferguson
Amy Lanz
Ellise Adams*
Marlena Primeau*

Student Affairs
Alan Constant (SSC)
Suzy Steen (OIE)

Faculty Senate
Mitch Berbrier* (President)

Co-Chairs: Brent Wren and Andrea Word

September 2013 – March 2014: The General Education Steering Committee met to discuss the general education curriculum at UAH.

Meeting 1

- committee considered an outline of the plan of action for subsequent meetings
- committee reviewed a list of guiding principles

Meeting 2 (Conceptual Framework)

- committee reviewed UAH's Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Plan
- committee generated lists of core competencies essential for engagement in a 21st century context and in keeping with the UAH institutional identity

Meeting 3 (Conceptual Framework/Structure)

- focused discussion on the complexities of skills, behaviors, knowledge, and competencies identified in Meeting 2 as core to what it means to be a UAH-educated student

- discussion included a debate regarding the current state of affairs within the general education courses at UAH, in terms of critical skills, diversity of perspectives, and relevant content domains represented.

- concluded with a discussion regarding the need to have a common understanding of exactly what happens in the UAH general education courses, from representatives of the departments that deliver those courses

Meeting 4 (Structure/Content)

- committee met with representatives of each department currently delivering general education courses at UAH

- subgroups of the committee rotated through four 20-minute sessions in which department chairs provided teams of committee members with overviews of the current UAH GER courses

Meeting 5 (Mission/Structure)

- committee reviewed summary of the semester's work.
  - reviewed the emerging conceptual framework in light of the current course offerings

Interim period (Procedures/Policies)

- information gathered on behalf of the committee regarding current procedures and policies
  - discussions with the college advisors and registrar as well as recruitment and admissions personnel in between the end of Fall semester and the beginning of the winter break.

Meeting 6 (Comprehensive Review)

- committee received report regarding procedures and policies held with college advisors, the registrar, and recruitment/admissions personnel
- discussion of findings to date regarding the conceptual framework, the curricular structure, and relevant policies/procedures surrounding the general education curriculum at UAH
- committee appointed subgroups representing each college to draft recommendations

March – April 2014 (Subcommittee meetings and final Committee meetings)

- first draft of recommendations produced and distributed to committee
- vote taken on recommendations/rationales
  - 80% approval or better on original 11 recommendations
- requested consolidation of the recommendations and adjustment of rationales/phrasing
- second draft distributed to the committee
- final onground meetings of the committee (April 7th and April 11th)
- minor revisions to draft
- third draft distributed electronically on April 16, 2014
- final draft of recommendations distributed to the committee (April 19, 2014)

Mission: The mission of the general education core at UAH is to prepare individuals to be **successful, capable, responsible, and ethical** in their roles as **students, professionals, citizens, and leaders.**

Recommendation 1: We recommend that all colleges* **adhere to a CONSISTENT CORE distributed across Areas I-IV** as follows.

Area	Disciplinary Focus	Hours
I (3-6 hours)	EH (101 or 101S) & 102 or EH 105 (Honors students only)	3-6 hours
II* (12 hours)	Fine Arts	3 hours
	Humanities (literature)	3 hours
	Humanities (non-literature)	3 hours
	Humanities/Fine Arts	3 hours
III (11-12 hours)	Mathematics	3-4 hours
	Natural Sciences (lab)	8 hours
IV* (12 hours)	History	3 hours
	Social & Behavioral Sciences (non-history)	3 hours
	History/SBS	6 hours

*Recommendation 2: We recommend that the **UAH general education core (Areas I-IV) be RENAMED** to: (a) distinguish the courses from Area V courses, and (b) reflect its position as the core of a cohesive and coherent undergraduate curriculum.*

*Recommendation 3: We recommend that the courses of the UAH GER be **mapped out on a COMPETENCIES-ORIENTED MATRIX** indicating the relationships among the courses across **Areas I-IV, their curricular objectives, and associated student learning outcomes**.*

*Recommendation 3a: We recommend that a **set of CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES tied to the competencies matrix be formalized** to insure coherence and cohesion of experience and learning across Areas I-IV of the UAH GER.*

*Recommendation 3b: We recommend that a related **set of student LEARNING OUTCOMES be identified** and mapped to the courses eligible for inclusion with Areas I-IV of the UAH GER.*

*Recommendation 4: We recommend that **all colleges DEVELOP COURSES** to be included in the gen-ed curriculum.*

*Recommendation 4a: We further recommend that all colleges and departments pursue **development of INNOVATIVE general education courses** reflecting the **vibrant and complex relationships among arenas of knowledge in the 21st century** and that such course development and innovation **be supported through appropriate funding and professional reward mechanisms** reflecting institutional commitment to and valuing of the general education core of the undergraduate curriculum.*

*Recommendation 5: We recommend that **coherent, cohesive, and positive MESSAGING be created and coordinated through recruitment, admissions, the Student Success Center, the course catalog, and advising** to reflect the functions of the core.*

*Recommendation 6: We recommend that **academic ADVISORS across the university receive continuous professional development and updates** regarding the informational, relational, and contextual aspects of the general education curriculum and its offerings.*

*Recommendation 7: We recommend that **P/F be ELIMINATED as an option in grading** for courses taken to fulfill Area I-IV requirements in the GER.*

*Recommendation 8: Whereas the conceptual, structural, and procedural changes recommended above entail a long-term perspective on the design and evaluation of a significant portion of the undergraduate curricular experience, and whereas there is currently no university-level unit or structure that is or would readily be able to coordinate and guide the work outlined above, we recommend the **immediate establishment of a UNIT dedicated to coordination and evaluation of procedures, policies, and evaluation** of **the GER courses, the GER curriculum, and the GER program itself**, and that such an entity be housed within Academic Affairs.*

Questions?