

**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

GENERAL EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

RATIONALE:

Current Structure and Charge of the General Education Committee:

The General Education Committee is a committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council. According to the Charter (amended 12/18/06), it consists of the Associate Dean for General Education *ex officio*, the Chair of the General Education Assessment Committee of the Council on Academic Assessment or designee *ex officio*, at least five but no more than ten members of the Teaching Faculty, at least two of whom are members of the Council, two Professional Faculty, two Undergraduate Students, at least one of whom is a member of the Council, and no more than two voting members selected from Faculty or Staff who are not students or Voting Faculty. The Chair of the Council consults with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education when determining the membership of this Committee.

The Committee is charged with considering and approving new courses proposed for inclusion in the General Education program as well as revisions to existing courses designed to qualify them for the program.

The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education has the authority to grant waivers and make appropriate substitutions for individual students. The Committee is the appellate body for students who are not satisfied with their waiver requests. In practice, the Associate Dean for General Education reviews straightforward waiver requests and involves the Committee in deciding more complicated cases.

Under the current Charter, the Associate Dean for General Education's main official responsibility, besides serving as *ex officio* member of the General Education Committee and the General Education Assessment Committee, is to review waiver requests from students. The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education has the authority to delegate additional responsibilities, for example, coordinating assessment of General Education courses with staff from the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness and Institute for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership.

Middle States Self Study and Strategic Planning Committee Recommendations

The proposal to create a General Education Advisory is in response to the recommendations advanced by the Middle States Self Study and the Strategic Planning Committee.

The following are some of the recommendations from the Self Study that pertain to this proposal:

- Governance committees should discuss the current makeup of instructors in the General Education program and decide whether the mix of tenure track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, graduate students, and part-time faculty should be monitored — and, if so, by whom.
- The General Education Committee should consider ways to publicize information from the petition and exception process.

- The General Education Committee should review the academic progress of students in highly-sequenced degrees or combined programs to evaluate whether their total requirements pose a hardship that should be modified to facilitate timely graduation.

Proposed Structure and Charge for the General Education Advisory Board

The General Education Advisory Board should be chaired by the Associate Dean for General Education and include up to twenty (20) instructors (teaching faculty and part-time/adjunct faculty), with at least one person from each of the different categories of the General Education requirements, and up to five (5) undergraduate students from different majors. Membership on the General Education Advisory Board should not only be representative of the different categories of General Education courses, but should also appropriately represent the units responsible for teaching courses in the General Education program.

Additionally, due to the unique role that the College of Arts and Sciences holds in the administration of the General Education curriculum, it is prudent to include a member of the CAS Dean's Office as an *ex-officio*, non-voting member. Similarly, the important role of advising undergraduate students about the General Education Curriculum falls heavily to the Advisement Services Center. Therefore, the Director of the ASC will be included on the Board as an *ex-officio* non-voting member.

Members of the General Education Advisory Board shall serve a three-year term, which may be renewed once, but initially some members will be appointed on a one- and two-year basis to allow for continuity as well as rotation. The Governance Council will be asked each year Spring to nominate individuals for terms beginning the following academic year. Appointments will be made jointly by the Provost and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.

The Committee would play a proactive ongoing role in the effort to conceptualize a General Education program that is relevant to the realities of the University at Albany as a 21st century university. It would be responsible for ensuring that the principles and practices of the General Education program are well understood by all stakeholders, so that all concerned parties understand that General Education courses are an integral part of undergraduate work. In this context, the Committee would be responsible for soliciting student input on an ongoing basis about desirable General Education courses, and work with deans and department chairs to find support for faculty to design and teach such courses. Additionally, the Advisory Board would work with departments to develop assessment processes and strategies for implementation of new General Education requirements.

The General Education Advisory Board and, in particular, the Associate Dean, would be responsible for publicizing the General Education program to new faculty and incoming students, to "demystify" the processes of course proposals and waiver requests.

UAC's General Education Committee would continue its role in considering and approving new courses proposed for inclusion in the General Education program as well as revisions to existing courses designed to qualify them for the program. It would also continue its role in reviewing student requests for waivers and substitutions.