

**Council on General Education Minutes**  
**March 21, 2023**  
**10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., STV 140**

**Presiding:** Gregory Ferrence

**Present:** Brian Aitken, Allison Antink Meyer, Mary Elaine Califf, Gregory Braswell, Linda Clemmons, Gregory Ferrence, Kimberly Nance, Yvette Pigman, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Chris Worland, and Haiyan Xie

Ferrence called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**Guests:**

Malinda Aiello, Program Director, Illinois Articulation Initiative  
Ryan Smith, Director, University Assessment Services

**Information Items:**

**1. General Education Assessment Update – Ryan Smith**

Smith distributed handouts to Council members to give them an overview of the General Education assessment process and an overall update. He told members they should all have access to the information already in Power BI but will verify everyone's access following the meeting.

Smith and Program Coordinator Derek Meyers, worked last summer on collecting artifacts, establishing rubrics, and having faculty panels review artifacts for the General Education categories. According to Smith, the only two categories left to be completed are Social Sciences and Individuals in Civic Life and he hoped to complete both this upcoming summer. Smith will need to check with Hurd regarding the availability of a rubric for the ICL category, but the SS category is ready to be reviewed by faculty. He noted his office learned more from the overall process than the outcomes.

Last spring, students were asked to complete a survey on the General Education program. The implementation fidelity for the survey was to determine if the program was being implemented as intended. Based on results, Smith believed the General Education program was successful in terms of adherence and duration but was questionable regarding the quality of delivery and participant responsiveness. While students think overall having General Education is a good idea, they felt the curriculum needs work.

Ferrence asked if students would be more inclined to want to take the courses if they were free. Smith responded that in the open-ended questions, a reoccurring theme was that students felt they did not have the time or the money for General Education courses.

Smith told Council members the current plan is to conduct the survey every three years with the next survey being conducted in spring 2025. Ferrence noted a response rate of 1,300 students was not bad all things considered. Worland asked who received the survey. Smith said he would need to look back at his notes but knew students in the IAI program were excluded and believed those sampled had to have completed a few General Education courses.

Califf pointed out that if a course was taken as part of the major, students may associate the course as a major course as opposed to a General Education course. Worland added that anecdotally, it can be difficult for students to determine speak to the value of what General Education does as it can be difficult to explain how/when something is learned. Califf agreed students do not often make the correlation. Ferrence also agreed and noted that the acquisition of knowledge/skills is hard to pin down as not everyone as the same experience with General Education.

Smith informed Council members that with a potential new General Education program being explored, there have been thoughts as to how to manage its assessment moving forward. He noted the framework currently being explored was just a suggestion and would need to be vetted by various levels/bodies. The proposed framework would be faculty driven and looks to make the overall process less overwhelming/time consuming for all parties.

### **Action Items:**

#### **2. MQM 120 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Workplace (revision to existing SS course)**

The course was proposed by Dr. Tina Williams, Chair, Department of Management & Quantitative Methods.

Ferrence noted the revision to the course was primarily a request to be considered for the IDEAS designation. He added the existing course objectives on the syllabus were mapped out to corresponding IDEAS objectives. Rivadeneyra added the course description had been revised as well. Worland questioned if the new description was within the 50-word count limit. Aitken confirmed it was over. Nance asked if the Council would like to approve pending the department editing the description to fit within the 50-word limit. Rivadeneyra and Califf both felt they would like to see the edited description before making a decision.

A motion was made by Califf to table MQM 120 for a revised course description that is within the 50-word limit. Rivadeneyra seconded.

A vote was taken. All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

Simmons will contact Williams and to request the revision. Nance noted it would be nice to add a cutoff to the word count in the textbox capabilities to the new curriculum software requirements list.

#### **3. SED Exemption Requests**

**a) Learning Behavior Specialist I Sequence (request for QR category exemption)**

**b) Low Vision and Blindness Sequence (request for SMT category exemption)**

**c) Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sequence (request for LH category exemption)**

Ferrence noted a summary sheet had been provided by the department mapping the requested General Education objective to the course objectives. He added the process was a little confusing. He found bullet points on the General Education homepage that seemed to indicate the mapping had not been correctly done. Aitken directed Council members to the individual designation descriptions found under the *Information for Faculty* tab of the General Education website. Rivadeneyra explained the opening paragraph for each designation tends to have a more detailed explanation as to what qualifies for each designation.

Califf expressed concern for the requests as it was her understanding exemptions were not based on a course(s) but on the curriculum as a whole for a major and/or sequence. The requirements for the designation should be met across multiple courses within the program to qualify for an exemption. Aitken expressed the same concern and thought the request may be the department's attempt at trying to shave hours off the program requirements. He noted that per the catalog description, there should be a demonstrated "disciplinary expertise" to be exempted from a General Education category.

Upon review of the three requests, members felt the LH category exemption request was the weakest of the three. However, the request for the SMT category exemption made a valuable argument and members felt while the request was not adequate, it had potential to be considered in the future.

A motion was made by Califf to reject the Learning Behavior I Sequence request for the QR category exemption. Aitken seconded.

A vote was taken. All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

A motion was made by Nance to reject the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sequence request for the LH category exemption. Rivadeneyra seconded.

A vote was taken. All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

A motion was made by Califf to reject the Low Vision and Blindness Sequence request for the SMT category exemption but with the message to the department there was potential for the request to be considered if it was revised to look across the curriculum and not based on one course. Antink Meyer seconded.

A vote was taken. All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

Aitken made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pigman seconded.

Meeting adjourned: 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Soemer Simmons

# Overview of General Education Assessment Process & Update

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## 1. CGE operating policies

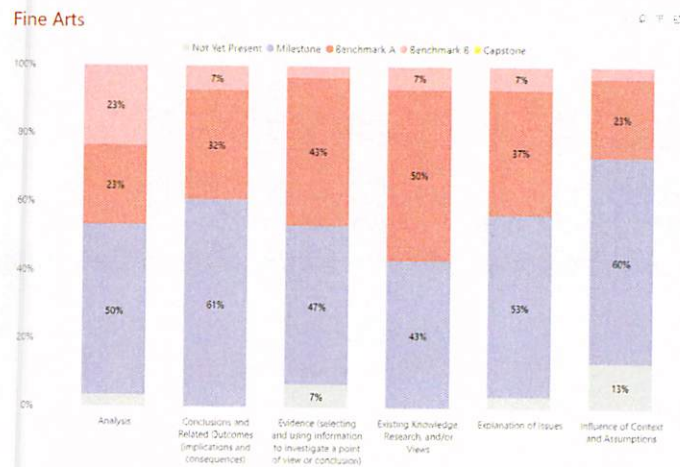
The responsibilities of the Council are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- To coordinate the undergraduate curriculum for General Education and Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS), ensuring that the spirit of the philosophy of General Education is maintained by the program.
- **To periodically review and analyze existing General Education and IDS courses and programs, based on program objectives and student outcomes.**
- To report recommendations to the Academic Senate regarding program modifications.
- To provide consultation to departments, colleges, and other faculty groups who are planning new additions to the undergraduate curriculum for General Education and IDS.
- To review and approve or disapprove all proposals for new programs (majors, minors, sequences), courses, and changes in existing programs/courses connected to General Education and IDS, in consultation with the Director of General Education.
- To provide the Academic Senate each year with a report of the Council on General Education's proceedings.

## 2. Current general education status

Area	Reviewers	Rubrics available	Artifacts collected	Artifacts reviewed
Fine arts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Humanities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Math & quantitative reasoning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sciences	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social sciences	✓	✓	✓	Summer 23
Individuals in civic life	✓	No	✓	Summer 23

## 3. Overview of artifact analysis from summer 2022<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> CGE policies – [link](#)

<sup>2</sup> Artifact analysis – [link](#)

#### 4. Overview of student survey from spring 22<sup>3</sup>

##### Implementation fidelity: Student survey

Fidelity area	Description	Judgment
Adherence <i>Exposure to courses</i>	Whether or not the program (courses) was actually implemented	✓
Duration <i>Number of credit hours</i>	Quantity of exposure	✓
Quality of delivery <i>Artifact analysis Syllabi Learning outcomes Rubrics Scale</i>	Degree to which program elements were delivered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction with implementation</li> <li>• Quality of learning materials</li> <li>• Use of scoring criteria</li> <li>• Student learning at scale</li> </ul>	?
Participant responsiveness <i>Student survey: numerical &amp; text responses</i>	Degree to which participants were receptive to the program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Attention</li> <li>• Interest</li> </ul>	?

##### Student opinions: % strongly agree + agree in 2022

Question	Judgment
General Education courses challenge students to think about how those courses are relevant to students' majors and/or future careers.	51%
The main purpose of General Education courses is to help students become more well-rounded individuals and responsible citizens.	63%
General Education courses have helped me or will help me choose a major.	24%
If General Education courses were not required by ISU, then I would probably still enroll in these courses.	18%
I would prefer to take additional courses related to my major instead of taking an equivalent number of General Education courses.	78%
General Education courses are easier than introductory-level courses for my major.	30%

<sup>3</sup> Student survey – [link](#) | n=1,295. Results refer to students who completed the survey.



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## Contributions to learning: % strongly agree + agree in 2022

Area	Judgment
Thinking reflectively: 43% Experiencing & reflecting on global issues: 42% Identifying and solving problems: 41% Writing in a variety of contexts and disciplines: 40% Making informed judgments: 39%	+
Effectively reporting information: 38% Delivering purposeful presentations: 36% Analyzing data to examine research questions: 35% Explaining how the humanities contribute to quality of life: 35% Transferring learning to new and novel situations: 34% Working effectively in teams: 34%	✓
Making ethical decisions: 33% Interacting in a variety of cultural contexts: 32% Using theories to understand the diverse and natural world: 28% Engaging in socially beneficial and diverse activities: 26%	-

## Text responses: % strongly agree + agree in 2022

Question	Sample
What do you believe are strengths of Illinois State University's General Education program?	One of the most important strengths I've noticed is the <b>diverse courses</b> available for each category. In almost every category, you can find a course that can somehow <b>relate to your major</b> and/or provide <b>additional context and knowledge</b> that you can use in the future. I <b>apply</b> things that I've learned in my general education courses to my major courses almost every day. I think the University does an effective job of <b>creating connections</b> between the courses and providing a wide range of <b>options</b> .
What do you believe are areas for improvement within Illinois State University's General Education program?	The gen ed system was created over 100 years ago. Aren't we supposed to be evolving? I can't believe how much <b>time and money I've wasted</b> on classes and <b>information of which I no longer remember</b> any of the learned "skills." I understand the theory of rounding out a person's education. But I also believe that it <b>encourages substandard practice</b> as you learn to just get by in classes you don't really care about.  I just do not think gen Eds should be mandatory and sadly my <b>GPA will (suffer) from it</b> .
Please provide any additional comments regarding Illinois State University's General Education program:	The second a student attempts to bring up the issue, we just get told the same things over and over again. "Everyone had to take them," or "You're just complaining because you don't want to do the work." This is hard to listen to. We are the students that are taking the classes and it <b>feels as if our opinion isn't heard</b> .



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## 5. Assessment planning: Moving forward

### GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

#### PLANNING

Faculty review and revise learning outcomes.

Faculty create, review and/or revise evaluative criteria (rubric, for example).

#### ASSESSING & LEARNING

Communication of outcomes and evaluative criteria to GE faculty.

General education faculty identify assignments in Canvas.

University Assessment Services collects assignments in Canvas.

Faculty reviewers identified and recruited.

University Assessment Services holds an orientation for faculty reviewers.

Faculty read and rate assignments.

#### COMMUNICATING

UAS created Power BI visualization.

Reports created by CGE, Associate VP, or other faculty. Include abstract, methodology, strengths, improvements.

Targeted reports by program / department.

Leadership reports findings to faculty.

Results presented at CIPD symposium (general summit).

#### IMPROVING

Process created to document improvements / identification of strengths

CGE documents improvements to the curriculum.

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
<b>Planning</b> Equity Sustainability Quant	<b>Planning</b> Global Creativity Sci inquiry	<b>Planning</b> <u>Well</u> being Liberal studies Comm Writing	<b>Planning</b> Equity Sustainability Quant	<b>Planning</b> Global Creativity Sci inquiry	<b>Planning</b> <u>Well</u> being Liberal studies Comm Writing	
<b>Assessing &amp; Learning</b> Comm Writing	<b>Assessing &amp; Learning</b> Equity Sustainability Quant	<b>Assessing &amp; Learning</b> Global Creativity Sci inquiry	<b>Assessing &amp; Learning</b> <u>Well</u> being Liberal studies Comm Writing	<b>Assessing &amp; Learning</b> Equity Sustainability Quant	<b>Assessing &amp; Learning</b> Global Creativity Sci inquiry	
	<b>Communicating</b> Comm Writing	<b>Communicating</b> Equity Sustainability Quant	<b>Communicating</b> Global Creativity Sci inquiry	<b>Communicating</b> <u>Well</u> being Liberal studies Comm Writing	<b>Communicating</b> Equity Sustainability Quant	
		<b>Improving</b> Comm Writing	<b>Improving</b> Equity Sustainability Quant	<b>Improving</b> Global Creativity Sci inquiry	<b>Improving</b> <u>Well</u> being Liberal studies Comm Writing	
<b>Indirect</b> n/a	<b>Indirect</b> n/a CIPD symposium	<b>Indirect</b> Student Survey CIPD symposium	<b>Indirect</b> Faculty feedback CIPD symposium	<b>Process Rx</b> Evaluation – <a href="#">appendix F</a> CIPD symposium	<b>Indirect</b> Student Survey CIPD symposium	