

Council on General Education Minutes

March 3, 2026

10:00-11:00 a.m., STV 140

Presiding: Gregory Ferrence

Present: Brian Aitken, Linda Clemmons, Gregory Ferrence, Katie Krcmarik, Brian Rejack, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Robbie Shorter, and Jing Wang

Ferrence called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m.

Discussion Item:

1. 300-level & 400-level courses as General Education courses

CJS 308 Race, Ethnicity & Criminal Justice (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27 – ELCE designation

Simmons informed Council members Hurd had researched Illinois State's four-year public institutional peers and found that except for Western Illinois University, all other four-year publics offered 300 & 400 general education courses. Hurd did not think there would be many upper division courses but thought ELCE designated courses especially would lend themselves to be 300 or 400-level. She was supportive of allowing 300 and 400-level courses to carry a general education designation.

Aitken thought there may be issues with perception with having 300 and 400-level courses count as general education courses and thought students and parents would be offput by it. However, he felt it may be different for ELCE courses as it was more likely students would be looking to take those courses later in their careers. He added that the course numbering system does not always align with the actual course difficulty/expectations.

Ferrence agreed that many students put off even 100-level general education courses until later in their careers. He added that the decision to allow 300 and 400-level courses was broader and was precedent setting as to how the Council wished to move forward. Aitken asked how departments determined what made a course 200-level vs. what made it a 300-level course. Rejack responded he thought it depended on each department which meant there was not a standardized determination process.

The question was raised why it was not proposed as a 200-level course. Rivadeneyra responded it was an already existing course. Rejack thought the department was trying to broaden the scope of who could take the course. Rivadeneyra acknowledged the ELCE course requirement would most likely be taken later in a student's career, but the hope had been that underclassmen would have the opportunity to engage in courses that fulfilled the requirement as well. She added she was all right if freshmen and sophomores took a 300 or 400-level course as long as general education was "in the bones" of the course. She suggested courses would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Council as they were proposed to see if they are broad enough to truly fit within General Education.

Ferrence asked Shorter for a student perspective. He agreed with Rivadeneyra's thought that it would need to be on a case-by-case basis. He also agreed with Aitken in that he could see why some would see the 300 or 400-level number as daunting and choose to take the course later. Aitken added that departments would not be able to major restrict courses if they carried a General Education designation.

Rivadenebra pointed out that 300 and 400-level courses would also count toward the senior level hours requirement for students which would be beneficial for some students.

Clemmons informed Council members in her experience, non-major students tended to struggle in upper-level courses. Clemmons has taught HIS 104A06 and HIS 310. Both count toward the AMALI requirement and non-History majors can take either course. She noted that in general, students tended to do worse in HIS 310 as in theory, it is a more advanced course. Rivadenebra noted this could be problematic in departments/schools that scaffold their courses.

Aitken noted that the course was not a good example to base a decision on as CJS tends to major block most of its courses. However, looking at recent grades, it did seem that freshmen did not do as well in the course.

In the interest of time, Council members decided to continue discussion and take action on this matter at the next meeting.

Action Items:

2. Approval of February 17, 2026

Ferrence asked if there were any corrections to the minutes as presented. There were no corrections. The minutes were approved as presented.

3. BS-SMT Courses

Ferrence reminded members that to qualify for GE27, courses should not have a prerequisite. However, per current BS-SMT designation guidelines, courses must have a prerequisite to have the BS-SMT graduation requirement designation. Hurd had researched the issue prior to the last meeting and found that of the current 49 BS-SMT courses, 13 no longer have pre-requisites. Hurd also met with all the science department chairs earlier in the week and most did not know about the requirement. The chairs did not feel that the BS-SMT designation required an additional prerequisite course.

Aitken asked if there was an issue with just changing the catalog copy or if any proposed changes had to be approved by the Academic Senate. Simmons responded the official Academic Senate policy does not require an additional prerequisite course for the BS-SMT designation so the change to the catalog would be a change to the procedure and not the policy. Rejack suggested alternative catalog language could be to remove the prerequisite but to add language like "students taking x course often or typically take x course prior" to keep the spirit of the requirement. Rivadenebra asked for confirmation that students could not "double-dip" the requirement with the SCMT General Education requirement as well. Aitken confirmed that if a course counted as both designations, students would need to select which requirement they wished the course to count toward.

Aitken made a motion to revise catalog copy to remove the additional prerequisite course requirement for BS-SMT courses. Seconded by Rejack.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.
The motion carried.

Simmons will ask Hurd to submit the editorial change.

4. ANT 102 Human Origins: An Introduction to Biological Anthropology & Archaeology (existing ANT course)

- Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation
- Proposed for BS-SMT graduation requirement

The course was proposed by Natalie Schaad, Assistant to the Department Chairperson, Department of Sociology & Anthropology.

Ferrence reminded Council members the course had been discussed during a prior meeting. The Council had tabled the course until a decision was made regarding requiring an additional course for BS-SMT graduation requirement courses as the course could not count for both GE27 and the BS-SMT requirement if it were decided the additional prerequisite was needed. The Council determined an additional pre-requisite was not required to have the BS-SMT designation.

Rejack made a motion to approve ANT 102 for both the GE27 STEM designation and the BS-SMT graduation requirement. Seconded by Shorter.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.
The motion carried.

5. MAT 204 Geometric Reasoning for Middle School Teachers (new MAT course)

- Proposed for GE14 – QR designation

The course was proposed by Dr. Benton Duncan, Chair, Department of Mathematics.

Ferrence noted the course was discussed at the previous meeting. It is a new course that is being proposed for GE14 only and is part of a restructuring effort to better align courses because of the State of Illinois recently changing the hours requirement from 24 hours to 18 for middle school teachers. In the previous discussion, there was confusion as to which majors could/could not take the course for credit.

Hurd discussed the questions the Council had with Duncan and Duncan revised the course description to better clarify the not for credit for certain majors statement. Aitken noted the math service courses are all confusing on their language but added the courses were not for credit for math majors. Rejack asked if Duncan was aware that by having prerequisites, the course would not be able to have a GE27 designation. Simmons responded that Hurd had informed Duncan of this during their meeting.

Rejack made a motion to approve MAT 204 for the GE14 QR designation. Seconded by Rivadeneyra.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.
The motion carried.

6. MAT 132 Math Inquiry and Literacy (new MAT course)

- Proposed for GE14 – MAT designation

The course was proposed by Dr. Benton Duncan, Chair, Department of Mathematics.

Ferrence noted this proposal was like the one just discussed. As with the previous course, Duncan revised language to better clarify which majors could/could not take the course for credit. Aitken thought the course description needed work but did not have an issue overall with the course.

Clemmons made a motion to approve MAT 132 for the GE14 MAT designation. Seconded by Rejack.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

- 7. PHY 108 College Physics I (existing course)**
 - Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation
- 8. ELE 170 Sensors and the Smart Society (new course proposal)**
 - Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation
- 9. ELE 180 Introduction to AI & Applications (new course proposal)**
 - Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation
- 10. MUS 239A26 Ensemble: Experimental Music (new course proposal)**
 - Proposed for GE14 – FA designation
 - Proposed for GE27 – ELCE designation
- 11. PHY 110 Physics for Science and Engineering I (existing course)**
 - Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation
- 12. GEO 206 Oceans, Climate, & the Environment (new course proposal)**
 - Proposed for GE14 – QR designation
 - Proposed for BS-SMT graduation requirement
 - Proposed for GE27 – QL designation
- 13. SOC 330 Society and Environment (existing course)**
 - Proposed for GE27-AWI designation
- 14. CJS 220 Death & Justice (new course proposal)**
 - Proposed for GE27 – EHC designation
- 15. ANT 210 Utopias and Dystopias: Indigenous Latin America (existing course)**
 - Proposed for GE14-SS designation
 - Proposed for GE27-IS designation
- 16. LAL 210 Utopias and Dystopias: Indigenous Latin America (existing course)**
 - Proposed for GE14-SS designation
 - Proposed for GE27-IS designation
- 17. POL 151 Introduction to International Relations (existing course)**
 - Proposed for GE27-IS designation
- 18. CTK 120 History of Games**
 - Proposed for GE14-FA designation
 - Proposed for GE27-CA designation

19. ELE 160 Principles of Hardware Cybersecurity and Digital Trust (new course proposal)

- Proposed for GE27-STEM designation

20. MUS 153 Black Music I (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27-ELCE designation

21. MUS 154 Black Music II (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27-ELCE designation

22. MUS 155 The Orchestra Explored: From Haydn to Hollywood (new course proposal)

- Proposed for GE14 – FA designation
- Proposed for GE27 – CA designation

23. TEC 150 Graphic Communications Technology (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27 – CA designation

24. HSC 270 Global Contexts (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27 – ELCE designation

Action Items 7-24 were tabled due to time constraints.

Information Items:

25. Expedited Courses Approved for GE27: 2/13/26-2/26/26

<https://gened.illinoisstate.edu/gened28/implementation-plan/>

- AGR 120 Introductory Horticulture – approved for STEM designation
- AGR 201 Resources, Food & Society: A Global Perspective – approved for Individuals and Society designation
- ENG 130 Survey of American Literature – approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation
- GEO 211 Earth's Dynamic Weather – approved for STEM designation
- KNR 175 Leisure's Role in Individuals and Society – approved for Individuals and Society designation

Wang made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Rejack.

Meeting adjourned: 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons