

Council on General Education Minutes

March 17, 2026

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

Presiding: Gregory Ferrence

Present: Brian Aitken, Mouna Bounouader, Gregory Ferrence, Amy Hurd, Katie Krcmarik, Julie Murphy, Brian Rejack, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Robbie Shorter, Jing Wang, and Christian Wesselink

Ferrence called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Action Items:

1. Approval of March 3, 2026

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

2. 300-level courses as General Education courses

Discussion was tabled from the previous meeting due to time constraints. Ferrence reminded 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. Given the University's current course numbering system, he questioned if 400-level courses would be considered eligible for General Education as they are now reserved for graduate level courses. Hurd confirmed they would not be.

Rejack asked how that would work for those 300 and 400-level courses that were combined and if departments would still be allowed to offer combined courses if the 300-level version carried a general education designation. Rivadeneyra responded that Campus Solutions viewed the courses separately so the 300-level course could have the designation while the 400-level course did not. Rejack asked for clarification how that would work then as the courses are taught together but would need to be broad enough at the 300-level for general education without affecting the integrity of the 400-level graduate course. Hurd answered that hopefully the departments would not combine courses in this manner if they are approved for a general education designation. Ferrence added that the exclusion of being able to have a prerequisite on a general education course may help deter some of these combination courses from being scheduled as well.

Hurd did not think there would be many upper division courses but thought ELCE designated courses especially would lend themselves to be at the 300-level as this is the designation most likely not to be taken by freshmen. She added that the two courses currently on the Council's agenda for review for the ELCE designation that were at the 300-level are already existing courses. 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 was concerned about how well freshmen would do in a 300-level course.

Rejack noted the core issue was there was not a consistent definition of what constitutes a 300-level course across the University as each department handles it differently. He added that in some departments, it makes sense for a 300-level course to be part of General Education, while in others, not

so much. Council members agreed and thought that while 300-level courses should not be automatically excluded, they should be given an “extra lookie” on a case-by-case basis to determine if they should be included in General Education.

Aitken made a motion to allow 300-level courses to be considered for General Education designations on a case-by-case basis pending an “extra lookie” by the Council when reviewing. Seconded by Wesselink.

Ten in favor, none opposed, one abstained.
The motion carried.

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

- **Proposed for GE27 – ELCE designation**

The proposal was submitted by Jazmyn Niembazaa, Program Student Advisor, Department of Criminal Justice Sciences.

Ferrence noted the course was an existing course proposed for the ELCE designation and referred Council members to the notes Hurd provided regarding the proposal. Rivadeneyra felt this version of the course made sense for the ELCE designation but was concerned the course’s title and course description did not accurately reflect the planned ELCE course-related content. She would like to see both updated to better reflect the ELCE components were in the “bones” of the course. Rejack suggested language could be changed along the lines of “the course includes....”

Aitken agreed that this approach could work and is similar to what TCH includes in several of their course descriptions. He noted that CJS typically major blocks its courses and that this would need to be monitored if the course was approved. Rivadeneyra asked why they wanted the course then as general education if they major block it. Aitken responded that they major block their courses to ensure their majors can enroll first and then release them to the rest of the University. However, they will not be able to do so going forward.

Aitken made a motion to send CJS 308 back for revision to include specific ELCE language in the course description. Seconded by Rivadeneyra.

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

4. ELE 170 Sensors and the Smart Society (new course proposal)

- **Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation**

The proposal was submitted by Dr. Umar Iqbal, Associate Professor, College of Engineering.

Ferrence informed Council members it was a new course being proposed for the GE27 STEM designation. Based on the information provided, he felt the course was interesting and could potentially have strong student interest. Wesselink wondered if the course would be a better fit for the ELCE designation. Ferrence responded he thought it represented a true STEM designated course based on what students would be expected to do.

Aitken noted that while the course rationale that was submitted was fantastic, he got none of that from the actual course description. He added the course description is what will actually draw in the students,

and he wondered how they would be able to figure out how interesting the course is based on the description. Ferrence thought the course description was clear but acknowledged he may be biased due to his background. Hurd responded the Council could work with Iqbal to help make the course description clearer. Rivadeneyra noted the available character limit on course descriptions had increased with Coursedog and suggested the course rationale be used as the course description. Aitken agreed with Rivadeneyra's suggestion and added it would be nice if the University could hire a copywriter to assist with the course descriptions to make them more appealing to students.

Rivadeneyra made a motion to approve ELE 170 for the GE27 STEM designation pending an update of the course description to the course rationale language. Seconded by Aitken.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

Hurd will contact Iqbal to request the update be made to the course description.

5. ELE 180 Introduction to AI & Applications (new course proposal)

- **Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation**

The proposal was submitted by Dr. Jing Wang, Professor, College of Engineering.

Ferrence noted the proposal was for a new course. Several Council members expressed interest in taking the course based on its rationale. Aitken and Wesselink noted, like the previous proposal, the course rationale was excellent and should be used as the course description to increase student interest. Rivadeneyra noted there would be proposals from several departments for AI-related courses soon as it was a hot topic. She was concerned about whether there would be a potential overlap. Aitken responded that a similar situation occurred with several comic books courses and that the departments involved policed themselves. Hurd added she works with the departments if the courses cross colleges.

Hurd made a motion to approve ELE 180 for the GE27 STEM designation pending an update of the course description to the course rationale language. Seconded by Wesselink.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

Wang will update the course description to the course rationale language.

6. MUS 239A26 Ensemble: Experimental Music (new course proposal)

- **Proposed for GE14 – FA designation**
- **Proposed for GE27 – ELCE designation**

The proposal was submitted by Dr. Alex Stephenson, Assistant Professor, School of Music.

Ferrence noted it was a new course being proposed for both GE14 and GE27 designations. In regard to the GE27 designation request, while Ferrence said he could understand the experiential learning aspect of the course, he had concerns regarding whether it had a civic engagement component. Wesselink agreed with Ferrence's concern and thought it would depend on how the public performance aspect of the course was handled as to whether it would have a civic engagement component. For those performances that are held in the Center for Performing Arts or Kemp Hall, there tends to be a more civic engagement component. However, Wesselink noted that many times the performances are held

within Cook Hall or on the Quad with little to no public involvement and he questioned how those would be considered as having a civic engagement component.

Ferrence asked if there was a certain percentage threshold a course's content must meet to qualify for the ELCE designation, similar to IDEAS or AMALI. Hurd responded there purposefully was not a minimum threshold. Aitken pointed out the course was for one credit hour and asked if there was a requirement that courses within the designation had to be for three credit hours. Rejack asked if the requirement would be met if a student only took the course once. Wesselink responded students would have to take the course three times to fulfill the ELCE requirement.

Hurd wanted to know how often the course met, as Music in particular, tends to go beyond the time limits equal to one credit hour in its courses. Wesselink confirmed that when he participated in Ensembles, it required additional time expectations in the forms of practices and performances outside of the actual class time.

Rejack made a motion to table the proposal for further discussion due to time constraints. Seconded by Wesselink.

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

7. PHY 108 College Physics I (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation

8. PHY 110 Physics for Science and Engineering I (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27 – STEM designation

9. 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

10. SOC 330 Society and Environment (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27-AWI designation

11. CJS 220 Death & Justice (new course proposal)

- Proposed for GE27 – EHC designation

12. ANT 210 Utopias and Dystopias: Indigenous Latin America (existing course)

- Proposed for GE14-SS designation
- Proposed for GE27-IS designation

13. LAL 210 Utopias and Dystopias: Indigenous Latin America (existing course)

- Proposed for GE14-SS designation
- Proposed for GE27-IS designation

14. POL 151 Introduction to International Relations (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27-IS designation

15. CTK 120 History of Games

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

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

- Proposed for GE27-STEM designation

17. MUS 153 Black Music I (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27-ELCE designation

18. MUS 154 Black Music II (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27-ELCE designation

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

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

20. TEC 150 Graphic Communications Technology (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27 – CA designation

21. HSC 270 Global Contexts (existing course)

- Proposed for GE27 – ELCE designation

Action Items 7-21 were tabled due to time constraints.

Discussion Items:

22. April CGE Meetings

At the previous meeting, it was suggested the Council meet every Tuesday during the month of April to try and clear the backlog of course proposals to review. Simmons asked for confirmation members still wished to do so. Council members confirmed they would be willing and available to meet weekly in April. Simmons will send out meeting invitations for April 7 and April 21.

Information Items:

23. Expedited Courses Approved for GE27: 2/26/26-3/12/26

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

- ART 176 Arts and Society: Visual Arts – approved for Creative Arts designation
- BSC 101 Fundamental Concepts in Biology – approved for Scientific Literacy designation
- BSC 160 Microbiology and Society – approved for STEM designation
- ECO 101 Principles of Microeconomics – approved for Individuals & Society designation
- ECO 102 Principles of Macroeconomics – approved for Individuals & Society designation
- ECO 138 Economic Reasoning Using Statistics – approved for Quantitative Literacy designation
- ENG 124 Reading Film -approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation

- FCS 208 Dynamics of United States Contemporary Health Issues – approved for STEM designation
- HIS 104A01 History of Africa - approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation
- HIS 104A02 History of East Asia – approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation
- HIS 104A03 History of Latin America - approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation
- HIS 104A04 History of the Middle East - approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation
- HIS 104A05 History of South & Southeast Asia - approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation
- HIS 105 World History - approved for Exploring the Human Condition designation
- KNR 208 Dynamics of United States Contemporary Health Issues – approved for STEM designation
- LAL 109 Intro to Latina/O Studies – approved for Individuals & Society designation
- MUS 156 American Music as Cultural History – approved for Individuals & Society designation
- MUS 157 History of Jazz – approved for Creative Arts designation
- MUS 159 Survey of Rock and Popular Music – approved for Creative Arts designation
- NUR 138 Statistical Analysis and Reasoning in Nursing – approved for Quantitative Literacy designation
- SED 101 Disability, Learning, and Education: Foundations and Philosophical Perspectives – approved for Individuals & Society designation
- SOC 109 Intro to Latina/O Studies – approved for Individuals & Society designation

Bounouader made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Rivadeneyra.

Meeting adjourned: 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons