

Council on General Education Minutes

August 18, 2026

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

Presiding: Marko Dumančić & Katie Krcmarik

Present: Brian Aitken, Marko Dumančić, Gregory Ferrence, Katie Krcmarik, Julie Murphy, Cara Rabe-Hemp, Brian Rejack, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Jessica Sullivan and Sally Xie

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

Action Items:

1. Introductions

Introductions were made.

2. Overview of the Council

Dumančić informed Council members that the original timeline for implementation of the new General Education program had been restored to fall 2028. Given the time needed for departments to review and adjust their plans of study with course changes in Coursedog and allowing advisors time to learn the new curriculum while also being involved with the new Highpoint software implementation, it was determined that keeping a fall 2017 launch was too tight of a deadline to successfully get everything successfully implemented.

Dumančić added that due to the current backlog of proposals with at least another 30 already in process to route to the Council for review, it was decided for the Council to meet weekly in the fall with hopes that the Council can return to its every other week meeting schedule in the spring. Colleges have been asked to submit proposals by mid-October. The Council will make a determination regarding its spring schedule in late November/early December.

Dumančić reminded Council members of the attendance requirement and asked anyone who knew they would not be in attendance to notify Simmons of the absence prior to the meeting.

3. Election of Chair

Dumančić opened the floor for nominations.

Ferrence nominated Krcmarik to serve as chair. Seconded by Rivadeneyra.

Nine in favor, none opposed, one abstained.

The motion carried.

Krcmarik presided over the meeting.

4. Approval of April 28, 2026 Minutes

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

5. Approval of May 1, 2026 Minutes

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

6. MAT 113 Elements of Mathematical Reasoning (existing course)

7. MAT 113A01 Elements of Mathematical Reasoning: With Math Principles (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – QL designation

The proposals were submitted by Dr. Benton Duncan, Chair, Department of Mathematics.

The Council chose to discuss both proposals together. Simmons reminded the Council that the proposals had originally been submitted for expedited review but as there was a change in the number of credit hours, they were sent to the full Council for review. The Council reviewed it in spring and sent the proposals back to the department for revision requesting a better explanation of the course prerequisites. The department made the requested revisions and re-submitted for review.

Aitken noted he was one of the expedited reviewers on both proposals and that essentially it was the same course with 113A01 having a corequisite of IDS 114. He added that with the update of the prerequisite language regarding placement guidelines, he was fine with the proposals. Rivadeneyra agreed the revisions resolved any issues she previously had with the course.

A motion was made by Aitken to approve MAT 113 and MAT 113A01 for the GE28 QL designation. Seconded by Rejack.

Nine in favor, none opposed, one abstained.

The motion carried.

8. MUS 153 Black Music I (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

The proposal was submitted by Dr. Angelo Favis, Professor, School of Music.

The Council began discussion on the proposal but then began discussion on the ELCE designation (please see discussion item below). This item was administratively tabled due to time constraints.

9. Proposal Review Strategy

In an effort to try to move through the proposal backlog, it was suggested that similarly to several college curriculum committees, the Council assign two main reviewers to each proposal. These reviewers would provide a more in-depth vetting of the proposal and would look at items such as the presence of an anchor syllabus, alignment of learning objectives, the presence of assignment information, etc. The reviewers would then take the lead in discussing the proposal during the Council meeting at which point the entire Council would vote on the proposal. Rejack and Xie expressed concern with immediate implementation of this strategy, and both felt a common ground needed to be established first as to how to review the proposals, especially regarding the ELCE proposals. Xie also thought it would be best to wait until the Council vacancies were filled by the Academic Senate the following week and wondered if it would be helpful to invite proposers to the meetings. Ferrence and Rivadeneyra agreed it may be helpful when there was back and forth between the Council and a proposer for additional information but it was difficult to try and schedule as the Council could not

guarantee how many proposals it would review during a meeting and did not want to waste proposers time if they were not needed for the discussion.

A motion was made by Rivadeneyra to implement the above review process. Seconded by Rabe-Hemp.

Four in favor, four opposed, two abstained.

The motion did not carry.

The Council will revisit the topic once the Faculty Caucus and the University Curriculum Committee seat the new Council members late next week.

10. MUS 154 Black Music II (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

11. AGR 293 Verbal Communication in Agriculture (new course proposal)

- Proposed for GE28 – CI designation

12. ANT 270 Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

13. SOC 220 Societies: The Big Picture (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

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

- Proposed for GE14 – FA designation
- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

15. GEO 100 Introduction to Environmental Systems (existing course proposal)

- Proposed for GE14 – NS designation
- Proposed for GE28 – SL designation

16. GEO 205 Environment, Resources, and Sustainability (existing course proposal)

- Proposed for GE14 – ICL designation
- Proposed for GE28 – IS designation

17. MUS 158 Hip-Hop: Culture, History, and Practice (existing course proposal)

- Proposed for GE14 – FA designation
- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

18. SOC 141 The Social Fabric (new course proposal)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

19. SOC 230 Disaster: Risk, Response, and Recovery Through a Sociological Lens (new course proposal)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

20. POL 140 Introduction to Comparative Politics (existing course proposal)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

21. MUS 241 Text, Music, and Meaning (new course proposal)

- Proposed for GE14 – LH designation
- Proposed for GE28 – IFW designation

22. GEO 235 Regional Topics (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

23. GEO 235A01 Regional Topics: Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

24. GEO 235A02 Regional Topics: Geography of Latin America (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

25. GEO 235A04 Regional Topics: Geography of the Middle East and North Africa (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

26. GEO 135 World Geography (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – EHC designation

27. ENG 182 Public Rhetorics (existing course)

- Proposed for GE14 – HUM designation
- Proposed for GE28 – IS designation

28. SOC 250 Happiness, Wellbeing, and Society (new course)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

29. POL 101 Citizens and Governance (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

Action items 10-29 were administratively tabled due to time constraints.

Discussion Items:

30. ELCE Designation

After beginning review of the MUS 153 proposal, the Council began discussions regarding what the requirements were to qualify for the ELCE designation. Rabe-Hemp asked if course must have both experiential learning AND civic engagement components or if it was meant as having experiential learning OR civic engagement as this has been the source of much confusion among proposers. She added that she has received feedback and there is frustration among proposers regarding the lack of clear communication of expectations and added that while proposers may answer the questions that are asked of them, it does not seem that is what the Council actually wants to see. Dumančić noted depending on what learning objectives the proposer chooses, it would be possible to be an OR situation.

Aitken noted the Council has discussed the issue multiple times and the Council had not been able to come up with a clear answer. He added that what was intended for the designation in the beginning of

when Gen Ed 28 discussions began differed from where everything ended up. Ferrence agreed and said the Council decided it would be necessary to discuss the matter further when meetings resumed this fall. Ferrence added from the student viewpoint, based on the category description, it is implied courses would need to have both requirements. Otherwise, he noted, there should be two separate designations, one for experiential learning and one for civic engagement.

Rivadeneyra told Council members she was part of the original work group for the ELCE designation. She said that group's intent was to have both components required and provide a high impact practice (HIP) experience early on in the student's academic career. She added that most majors contain a bookend HIP experience at the end of the student's career in the form of capstones, internships, etc. Rivadeneyra also explained that during the initial town halls that were held to gather feedback for the new program, instructors were concerned where their courses would now fit. Instructors' concerns were calmed when they were told this designation would most likely be a good fit for them and added when requesting and earning the Carnegie classification for the University, this designation requiring both components was a big reason for the approval.

Rabe-Hemp responded that when Dr. Hurd came to speak to CAST faculty regarding Gen Ed 28 and this category in particular, the conversation was that the requirement was explained as needing one component or the other, not both. She pointed out that the STEM designation did not require courses to have components in all of those potential disciplines and that depending on timing on when conversations have been had, there is a lot of confusion and miscommunication surrounding this designation in particular.

Dumančić added that one of the weaknesses of the category was that while it required two of the different learning objectives to be met, there was not a requirement to which two so it would be possible for a course to focus primarily on one component and not the other depending on which objectives were chosen. Rivadeneyra responded that learning objectives were student-facing and are used in assessment but were not necessarily the definition of the category. Instead, the Council also uses the course rationale and actual category description when reviewing courses.

Krcmarik noted she had offered to sit down and discuss this category in particular with colleagues in her School as she understood their frustration. With the new budget model, there is push across many areas to expand into different categories. She added that better descriptions and overall communication were needed of requirements and expectations. Ferrence noted the Council had discussed it and while a checklist would be helpful, the Council could not be beholden to a checklist. He added the Council needed to have the capability to review and determine if a course met the spirit of the requirement even if all checklist items had been met. Ferrence felt that if the University felt the Carnegie designation mattered then care needed to be taken not to create issues by changing requirements post-approval. Dumančić expressed concern with giving proposers a checklist of requirements and then reviewing by unspoken or unspecified standards.

Krcmarik reminded Council members the ELCE designation had a handbook that contained a scoring rubric. Several Council members responded they had missed using the resource when reviewing courses in the ELCE designation. Rejack noted the rubric gives a clear outline of how to review courses and based on it, courses would need to have both experiential learning and civic engagement components to qualify for the ELCE designation. Aitken noted that all courses must have at least a score of seven or eight to qualify and that score would not be possible without having both components.

Rabe-Hemp suggested sending communication out to proposals then to break the cycle of confusion as to what course requirements are for the designation. Rivadeneyra suggested sending something out in the Gen Ed 28 announcement and asking if the Registrar's Office could update instructions on the curriculum web pages.

Dumančić informed Council members that Dr. Katy Strzepek, Director, Center for Civic Engagement, was confident there should be enough seats available to fulfill the demand for the category based on the requirement of having both components met. Dumančić had concerns if this would be true. Ferrence responded courses should not be approved with seats in mind and suggested if a category did not have enough capacity, then perhaps it should be removed. Rabe-Hemp cautioned the Council that this change had the potential to be seen as a "bait and switch" from proposers, and the Council could possibly see blowback, especially from those that have had proposals waiting for in the Council's proposal backlog.

Information Items:

31. Expedited Courses Approved for GE28: 5/1/2026-8/13/2026

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

- ENG 101 Researching How Writing Works – approved for IFTW designation
- ENG 101A10 Researching How Writing Works – approved for IFTW designation
- ENG 206 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Asia, Latin America & Africa – approved for EHC designation
- ENG 206A01 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Asia – approved for EHC designation
- ENG 206A02 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Latin America – approved for EHC designation
- ENG 206A03 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Africa – approved for EHC designation
- ENG 206A04 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Comparative – approved for EHC designation
- LAN 206 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Asia, Latin America & Africa – approved for EHC designation
- LAN 206A01 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Asia – approved for EHC designation
- LAN 206A02 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Latin America – approved for EHC designation
- LAN 206A03 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Women of Africa – approved for EHC designation
- LAN 206A04 Cultural Expressions & Social Contexts: Comparative – approved for EHC designation
- CSD 115 Human Communications: Speech, Language, and Hearing – approved for IS designation
- COM 110 Strategic Communication and Professional Messaging – approved for CI designation

Aitken made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Rejack.

Meeting adjourned: 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons