

Council on General Education Minutes

September 29, 2026

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

Presiding: Soemer Simmons

Present: Brian Aitken, Marko Dumančić, Gregory Ferrence, Dan Ispas, Julie Murphy, Cara Rabe-Hemp, Brian Rejack, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Jessica Sullivan, Sally Xie, and Malinda Aiello (ex-officio, non-voting)

Absent: Kristina Falbe and Katie Krcmarik

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

Action Items:

1. MUS 153 Black Music I (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

Rivadeneyra reviewed the rubric and noted the course does a better job of hitting the experiential element. She pointed to an assignment on policy and letter-writing as interesting but questioned whether the rest of the course addressed policy and suggested the assignment could be dropped in favor of something more directly relevant to the course.

Rejack noted that the Council had previously asked to see alignment between the assignments and the category, and that the proposers now had a new alignment document. He felt solid about the civic component based on that document, noting the course's broad outcomes speak to civic engagement.

Aitken agreed the completed alignment document did a better job of showing how the course meets the category outcomes, particularly how the policy paper meets the civic engagement piece of the category.

See motion and vote under Item 2 below, which covered both MUS 153 and MUS 154.

2. MUS 154 Black Music II (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

Aitken noted that MUS 153 and MUS 154 followed a similar framework in the way the application was structured.

Rabe-Hemp made a motion to approve both MUS 153 and MUS 154 for the GE28 ELCE designation. Seconded by Aitken.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

3. SWK 170 Introduction to Social Work (existing course)

- Proposed for GE14 – SS designation
- Proposed for GE28 – IS designation
- Previous Reviewers: Rabe-Hemp and Ferrence

The Council recommended an adjustment to the anchor syllabus.

Ferrence made a motion to approve. Seconded by Rabe-Hemp.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

4. MUS 210 The Mathematics of Music: Quantitative Reasoning Through Sound (new course)

- Proposed for GE28 – QL designation
- Reviewers: Rejack and Rivadeneyra

Rejack noted the category description allows for different disciplines to fit applied quantitative reasoning and called it an interesting approach. He was comfortable with the proposal since the course applies mathematics to music and fits the category.

Rivadeneyra noted the course opens students to different points of view, which she felt was exactly what a general education program should do, applying a mathematical concept to the world of music. She questioned whether the course reached the right level of mathematical reasoning.

Murphy noted the syllabus includes substantial physics content and felt the course had sufficient levels of quantitative reasoning.

Ferrence asked whether approving the course would build the capacity for a single department to effectively offer its own general education program, and whether there was a limit to how many courses from the same department a student could take toward gen ed. He also asked whether there were any concerns about articulation with IAI.

Rivadeneyra responded that students cannot take more than 55 credit hours within their major department.

Aitken asked whether the course met the intent of the category in terms of its general purpose and goal.

Dumančić made a motion to approve. Seconded by Rabe-Hemp.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

5. GEO 107 Natural Hazards (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – STEM designation
- Reviewers: Aitken and Xie

Aitken noted the only change to the course was its number, and that while the description needed work, the proposal was otherwise solid. He noted the course is part of licensure for early childhood education and wanted to confirm the change of the course level to the 100-level.

Xie noted she was glad to see the change from the 200-level to the 100-level, as it would make the course more accessible to first-year students.

Aitken made a motion to approve. Seconded by Ferrence.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

6. WGS 120 Gender, Sex, and Power (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – ELCE designation

- Reviewers: Rejack and Rivadeneyra

Rivadeneyra noted the course serves as an introduction for the minor and certificate and is an existing social science and IDEAS course. She felt the proposal was not as clear or transparent as those submitted with an alignment document, but noted she saw possibilities, particularly in the assignments.

Rejack noted the information provided was minimal in terms of how the course fits within ELCE and felt it probably needed to return for more clarity.

Ferrence questioned whether eight assessments might be too many.

Rivadeneyra made a motion to send the course back for revision, asking the proposer to streamline the student learning outcomes and complete the alignment document. Seconded by Ferrence.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion carried.

7. ANT 362 Plagues, Pandemics, and People (existing course)

- Proposed for GE28 – SL designation
- Reviewers: Krcmarik and Sullivan

Sullivan noted the course's 300-level standing was her only concern regarding approval. She noted the course examines disease at a societal level and, as such, fits as an application of scientific methods. She pointed to the diverse reading list, participation as part of the grade, and an assignment in which the class collectively develops a disease handbook as an excellent synthesis of data and knowledge, using critical reading responses to engage with scientific data and methodologies.

Rivadeneyra felt the course reads as a general class with a specific, clear focus, one that any student could step into and be challenged by without being exclusionary. She suggested the Council could recommend revising the course number downward to attract more students, but noted the level was not decisive for approval.

Aitken agreed with the recommendation to revise the course number downward.

Aiello asked whether the course would still transfer as upper-division credit, noting the Council needed to be careful about the designation given the course level.

Rejack asked whether the course's alignment with the description was sufficiently science-focused for the category. Ferrence, Xie, and Murphy each responded that it was the right kind of scientific content for the category.

Rivadeneyra made a motion to approve. Seconded by Rabe-Hemp.

The motion carried, approving the course at the 300-level. Dumančić will report back to the Council on whether the department would consider changing the course numbering.

Aitken made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Greg Ferrence.

Respectfully submitted,
Marko Dumančić