Date: May 6, 2002

To: Richard Watts, Chair UCSB Academic Senate

From: Academic Senate Task Force on General Education Muriel Zimmerman, Chair

RE: General Education Task Force Recommendation

In the attached report, we present the results of two and one-half years of work. We have reviewed the current General Education requirements, studied GE programs in comparable universities, and consulted widely. We released a draft report on June 11, 2001 and participated in an specially-convened Senate forum on General Education on October 16, 2001. Over the ten months during which our draft report was available for campus review on the Senate Web site, we received significant feedback from a wide range of faculty members, departments, and committees.

In what follows, we summarize the results of our deliberations and recommend a revised curriculum and a new plan for GE governance. The report is stronger for the important suggestions we received, and it varies significantly from the first version we circulated. We urge that all members of the campus community, including those who made themselves fully acquainted with the draft report, be given an opportunity to read this final report.

Our committee has had representative membership from the three undergraduate colleges (L&S, Engineering, Creative Studies) as well as knowledgeable and articulate students. Our consultants have included V. Johns, D. Estrada, F. Cordova, A. Wyner, J. Sonstelie, B. Huff, D. Marshall, T. Lee, E. Zimmerman, S. Velasco, S. Forester, L. Roberts (for WASC), L. Lytle, UCLA Provost B. Copenhaver, UCLA Vice Provost J. Smith, and Bard President L. Botstein. S. Velasco from UCSB Budget and Planning provided reports about GE enrollments at several stages of our work. We appreciate the support we have received from the Academic Senate Office. The assistance of Debra Blake and Claudia Chapman has been invaluable.

The Task Force expects that this report will be discussed at a special meeting of the Faculty Legislature on May 30, 2002, and submitted to a vote of the entire faculty as well as of the Legislature.

Attachment: General Education Task Force Recommendation

General Education Task Force Recommendation Report

May 6, 2002

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1.0 SUMMARY

In the report that follows, the General Education Task Force presents the findings of an extended period of study of the present General Education requirements at UCSB and recommends revisions to the present General Education Program. The academic program we recommend is designed for students pursuing *all* bachelor's degrees in the College of Letters and Science: the B.A. and also the B.S., B.F.A., and B.M. degrees. For B.A. students, the revision reduces by three the current number of courses presently required to satisfy the GE requirement (one course reduction in Areas C, D, E). For B.S., B.F.A., and B.M. degrees, the current number of courses required to satisfy the GE requirement is raised by one, with a flexibility option available (see Section 5.2 following). Our recommendation eliminates the option of satisfying the Core by means of Advanced Placement credit, and it provides somewhat altered area and special topic definitions. The reductions that are designated for them in the proposal. We believe that the GE program is a valuable common intellectual experience of all UCSB students, whatever their major: the GE program has a crucial role in helping students to become broadly educated, and GE courses help students to acquire needed communication, language, and quantitative skills.

We agree that the existing GE program has numerous intellectual strengths; the following recommendation is based largely on modifications of the academic design of the present program. Many of the problems we identify have come from the proliferation of courses and absence of an effective governance structure. The revised requirement assumes the establishment of a new General Education governance structure to provide meaningful academic planning and ongoing programmatic development and review.

The Task Force first convened on November 5, 1999, and we have had regular meetings of the full committee and of workgroups since that time. Our agenda has been a direct response to the charge we received. We were asked to review the current GE requirements; to study GE programs in other comparable public universities; to consult widely with knowledgeable parties; to consider GE in the context of a program that might have some element or elements that all UCSB undergraduate students in the colleges could share as a common experience; and to recommend possible revisions of the requirements subject to approval by the Faculty Legislature. We were also asked us to consider the recommendation of Governor Gray Davis for a community service requirement and to discuss possible additional ethnic studies courses within the GE requirement.

In response to specific elements of our charge: we recommend maintaining the present ethnicity requirement but provide a revision of the present description for courses that meet the requirement; we recommend a common GE program for all students who earn bachelor's degrees in the College of Letters and Science. We hope that the College of Engineering will adopt this program as well.

Our recommendations are consistent with the 2001 Evaluation Report submitted by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The WASC report affirms that it is "crucial to pay attention to the ways that the newest and youngest members of the UCSB community are welcomed and introduced to its core values and mission," and it expresses concern about "the size of classes and lack of personal attention as the greatest impediments to motivation." The WASC team raises crucial questions about the structure of leadership and the financial commitment that would enable UCSB to provide an improved undergraduate experience: unless "clearly defined financial and personnel commitments underpin planned improvements," they write, "it would be far too easy. . . for example, to

emphasize growing research aspirations at the expense of the undergraduate initiatives which are essential to UCSB's future."

2.0 TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP AND WORKGROUPS

Members:

T. Carlson, R. Bergstrom, A. Bermingham, C. Gutierrez-Jones**, D. Kunkel, A. Kuris, U. Mahlendorf, H. Marcuse, J. Michaelson, C. Michel, A. Stewart-Oaten*, R. Wood, W. Yuen, M. Zimmerman (Chair). Ex-officio: R. Watts. Permanent consultants: S. Forester, G. Johns, D. Estrada. Student Representatives: D. Dimitriu*, J. Gertwagen*, C. Smith*, R. Blair. Staff Support: D. Blake, C. Chapman.

*1999-2000 academic year; **11/1999-3/2002

Workgroups:

- D. T. Carlson, M. Zimmerman, Area A and GE Writing Requirement
- **U.** Mahlendorf, Area B
- D. W. Yuen, A. Kuris, R. Wood, A. Stewart-Oaten, Area C
- D. Kunkel, C. Michel, Area D
- **R**. Bergstrom, H. Marcuse, Area E
- □ A. Bermingham, Area F
- **U.** Mahlendorf, Area G
- **C**. Gutierrez-Jones, Ethnicity Requirement
- □ J. Michaelson, S. Forester, GE funding; enrollment, statistical data
- J. Gertwagen, C. Smith, D. Dumitriu, R. Blair, Student Representatives
- D. M. Zimmerman, U. Mahlendorf, GE Seminars for Freshmen
- **D** T. Carlson, Improvement of Teaching
- D. T. Carlson, R. Blair, Western Civilization Requirement

3.0 FINDINGS

We were invigorated by our charge and also overwhelmed at the task before us. We found more than 1200 courses on the GE list, a large number of which are open to *majors only* for the first two registration passes. From data provided by the College of Letters and Science advising office and the Office of Budget and Planning, we learned that only a small percentage of the courses on the GE list are frequently used by non-majors to satisfy General Education.

Students and departmental advisors find our GE program hard to understand, and faculty are frustrated by the way that the categories in our present program do not always match their understandings of the current status of their disciplines. There is, for example, no convenient place on our present GE list for many interdisciplinary courses. The majority of the courses on the present GE list are upper division, and while we do not think that GE is something that students should necessarily "get out of the way" in their first and second years, we are convinced that a larger number of lower-division GE courses should be available. Intellectual exploration in search of a major has always been one of the important functions of GE, and our GE program, with its shortfall in lower division courses open to non-majors, does not adequately fulfill that function. The result has been that a relatively small number of huge enrollment courses enroll a large proportion of GE students. Though these courses generally have discussion sections, sections are sometimes too large and not always well-supervised. Instructors of these large courses sometimes find that their students lack respect for intellectual inquiry, as well as for their teachers and fellow students.

Ladder-rank faculty are notably absent from GE teaching. In several studies we requested from the Office of Budget and Planning, we learned that approximately 35% of regular primary courses giving GE credit are taught by ladder faculty. We are dismayed by the unfavorable student/faculty ratio at UCSB. Many departments are unable to participate in re-design of courses for non-majors because they can hardly meet the needs of their majors.

Another part of the present GE requirement that appears not to work well is the Writing Intensive Requirement, which is fulfilled by writing a minimum of 1800 words in each of six GE courses. The idea of a writing requirement connected to subject matter courses is academically sound, but it requires that instructors and TAs have an understanding of effective assignments and can provide useful responses to writing. At present, though the writing requirement is a valuable feature in some GE courses, it is not infrequently perfunctory. The Academic Senate GE Committee has no time to reexamine courses that claim to meet the writing requirement, and it appears that at least some courses in which writing was assigned when the course was first proposed continue to carry "writing requirement" designation despite the fact that writing may not have been assigned at all in recent years. The L&S Advisors have informed us that students are permitted to follow the catalog year of their admission. Thus they will get writing-course credit for any course so designated in their catalog even if it is later removed from the list of eligible courses.

We have identified widespread campus concern for student communication and critical thinking skills. These crucial issues are the concern of all classes at UCSB, but they are the particular focus of courses in present Area A, Reading and Composition. We urge that all courses now in Area A be reevaluated and also that additional writing courses be developed, ideally from a variety of departments. For any class that satisfies a revised writing skills requirement, we suggest requiring multiple, interrelated writing assignments in which students receive sustained instruction and regular, substantial feedback about the fundamental elements of language (syntax, diction, style), the formation of logical and coherent argument, and the effective use of relevant evidence in the development of argument. We have also based our proposal for a revised GE program on the important idea that many—and we hope eventually all--courses in the GE core will include relevant communication activities. In these recommendations, we are in agreement with the Boyer Commission *Blueprint for America's Research Universities*. We hope that with the essential financial commitment to the hiring and training of additional teaching assistants for large lecture courses, communication skills can eventually be integrated with the subject matter of most GE courses.

In considering the present structure for review of GE, we found that the GE Committee's workload is so heavy that the committee in any given year can now do little more than review the large number of new proposals that are submitted. There is little time for ongoing monitoring of academic quality, and courses once put on the GE list stay on the list no matter how their content may have been altered. In studying the GE programs and governance structures of other research universities, we find that many have a designated General Education administrator and a well-defined process for monitoring quality.

In developing our plan for revision to the present General Education requirement, we were strongly committed to the following goals:

- **D** To build a GE program on a solid basis of courses explicitly designed for non-majors
- □ To raise academic standards in GE classes
- □ To ensure that GE courses are offered regularly and open to non-majors
- **D** To provide more GE opportunities at the lower-division level
- **D** To give every freshman the opportunity to take a small class with regular faculty
- **D** To increase the number of GE courses taught by regular faculty
- **D** To ensure that all GE courses have enough teaching assistants
- **D** To encourage a search for more effective models for TA training and mentoring
- □ To provide improved instruction in reading, writing, quantitative, and research skills throughout the GE curriculum
- □ To encourage *divisional* thinking about GE, so that more courses reflecting cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary divisional interests will be offered
- **D** To define a leadership structure to implement and monitor the new plan
- □ To support on-going campus-wide discussion of how to make large lecture classes engaging academic experiences for undergraduates

4.0 GENERAL EDUCATION PROPOSAL

The proposed GE plan has four components: Skills Courses, Core Courses, and one course each in Ethnic Studies and Western Civilization (see Table, Appendix 1). We have chosen to take a very broadly disciplinary approach to General Education, as opposed to a sampling of many designated areas of content. The large expansion of areas of content in the University has made it increasingly difficult to require every student to take a course in every area that is thought to be important, without the program appearing to be unacceptably superficial or biased. We have attempted to embody in our program the major ways that universities teach students to study nature and culture. Our goal is for every student to have encountered the ways of framing and answering questions that are contributed by the large disciplinary areas of the university. If such a goal is achieved, it would enable a student's continued intellectual exploration and development.

All Skills and Core courses must carry a minimum of four academic units or three units together with an associated one-unit laboratory course. Core courses will be open to non-majors at the first registration pass. Students may not satisfy the GE Core with Advanced Placement examination credit, although they may use Advanced Placement scores of 3 or higher to satisfy Skills courses.

Core courses will be designed to teach both the methods of the disciplinary area and also to explore some significant set of problems. Instruction in writing and critical research skills will be integrated into the core. Interdisciplinary courses are welcome: individual courses may be listed in more than one area of the core, although students may not use any single course to satisfy more than one area. We hope that departments and divisions will develop appropriate two-course sequences in addition to individual courses that meet a Core requirement.

SKILLS

- Writing: 2 courses. Courses should help students to acquire skills in writing explanation, analysis, and persuasion; critical and analytical thinking and reading; library research skills; information technology relevant to academic success as writers; and lecture note taking. Upper division students may not satisfy the writing skills requirement with lower-division courses. We strongly urge the development of upper-division writing-in-disciplines courses in many departments.
- Quantitative Reasoning: No change in the present requirement. 1 course, likely to be fulfilled in Core Area 5.
- Foreign Language: No change in the present requirement. We strongly urge departments to develop intensive language courses of the sort now sometimes available to graduate students.

CORE

Students take 2 courses in each of the following areas; the list of departments from which courses might come is not intended to be complete but only suggestive:

1. Art Studies: drama, dance, studio art, art history, music, film studies Disciplines that engage with the practice, history, criticism, theory and cultural significance of the fine and performing arts, popular arts and visual culture.

2. Literary and Textual Studies: literature, philosophy, political theory, classics, religious studies

Disciplines whose knowledge claims are based on the analysis of writings and whose methods include careful consideration of ways of reading texts.

3. Historical Studies: history, religious studies, art history, archaeology, classics Disciplines whose knowledge claims rely on the analysis of a broad range of sources about past cultures with the aim of understanding those cultures in themselves, as they have changed over time, and in their relationships to other cultures.

4. Social Sciences: sociology, economics, social psychology, communication, anthropology, political science

Disciplines whose knowledge claims are based upon the systematic study of human behavior, including analysis of how people interact in various contexts as well as examination of the organizational, institutional, and cultural conventions produced by collective groups and/or societies.

5. Science and Mathematics: astrophysics, biology, chemistry, biochemistry, biophysics, ecology, environmental studies, evolution, geology, geography, marine sciences, mathematics, physics, biopsychology, statistics

Disciplines whose knowledge claims are based on observation, experimentation, and deductive and mathematical reasoning with the aim of understanding and characterizing the origin, content, and evolution of the universe and the forces that continue to shape it.

ETHNIC STUDIES. 1 course; may be fulfilled from a designated course in any Core area or from an additional list of courses to be developed

At least one course that focuses on the history and the cultural, intellectual, and social experience of one of the following: Native Americans, African Americans, Chicanos/Latinos, or Asian Americans. Alternatively, students may take either of the following options: (1) a course that provides a comparative and integrative context for understanding the experience of racialized communities in the United States, or (2) a course that pursues a comparative analysis of race and/or ethnicity in the United States as well as in other settings.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION. 1 course; may be fulfilled from a designated course in any Core area or from an additional list of courses to be developed

Courses meeting the Western Civilization requirement should be broad interdisciplinary courses that engage students in critical debate concerning the major conceptual and historical foundations of Western culture.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Leadership and Governance

We hope for an altered climate of attentiveness to and responsibility for GE on campus. Senate reorganization provides an excellent opportunity to rethink GE implementation. It is not appropriate to micro-plan an implementation structure while reorganization is in progress, but it does seem to us that a simple and effective governance structure is possible.

We recommend the appointment of a faculty director of GE who, working with the Academic Senate Undergraduate Council, will take a leadership role in planning and implementation of the new program. One of the most important recommendations we make is that GE planning should be *divisional* and *college-wide*, in addition to *departmental*. Our present GE program is not characterized by larger-scale planning. In any quarter, there may be a small, medium, or large number of courses offered in any area. There is little guidance to departments about what they should offer and inadequate information for students to use to plan their GE programs over a period of years. The faculty director would study enrollment patterns and encourage the development of needed GE courses within departments and divisions and across divisions as well. This faculty director would brief departmental faculty and staff GE representatives and explore enhanced models for GE advising. To facilitate the review of all courses currently on the GE list, staff support for the faculty director and the designated GE workgroup in the Undergraduate Council will be essential.

We recommend that the faculty director of GE consider ways to provide training and other relevant resources for TA's who teach in the GE program, with particular focus on training in the teaching of writing. Another important audience for strategies for teaching writing may be faculty who wish to develop appropriate assignments for Core courses as well as for new courses that fulfill the writing skills area of the new GE program. Some departments already have such training programs in place that address the specific communication practices of their discipline. These departments would be encouraged to continue or expand their own practice of attending to the training and mentoring of TA's in GE classes.

We expect a major role for the L&S Executive Committee in the transition from one GE program to another and in the implementation of the new program. This committee already has some responsibilities for GE student petitions and is centrally involved in changes to majors and minors and all departmental PRP reviews.

5.2 Flexibility Option A. For the B.A. degree

To alleviate one of the main pressures leading to the proliferation of courses on the current G.E. list, a petition process will be set up whereby students working towards the B.A. degree may request to substitute at most one course not approved for G.E. This course would have to satisfy all G.E. criteria for that core area, although it might not be appropriate for the G.E. list for other reasons, such as frequency of offering or availability to non-majors. Students requesting this exception would have to demonstrate compelling reasons. These petitions would be subject to departmental and G.E. administrative approval.

B. For B.S., B.F.A., and B.M. Degrees

To accommodate the highly-structured curricula for B.S., B.F.A., and B.M. degrees, students in these degree programs may, at the junior year or later, take *one* additional approved GE course in any Core area except the area of their major to replace a second course in another Core area. Students may not skip any area of the Core, and the number of GE Core courses required remains at ten for all bachelor's degrees in L&S.

Implementation Recommendations from GE Committee

The General Education Committee (H. Marcuse, Chair) has deliberated thoughtfully about implementation issues and provided the Task Force with the following specific recommendations, all of which we endorse:

- □ When the revised GE guidelines have been approved by the faculty, information about the revisions will be published in the 2002-2003 GE Program requirements booklet. The booklet would note that all listed courses are currently under reconsideration, but current students may satisfy their GE requirements with courses that were on the list at the time they first enrolled at UCSB. Procedures will be defined that protect current students.
- The GE Committee, in conjunction with a Task Force on GE Implementation, will draw up and publish a "cookbook" description of the general criteria a course should meet in order to satisfy the revised GE requirements (e.g. have no prerequisites, be open to non-majors during first registration pass, explicitly teach disciplinary methods as well as content, possibly include instruction on writing and research skills, be offered at least once every year, etc.) A new course proposal form would be developed to reflect these changes.
- □ Additional, explicit guidelines will need to be drawn up for interdisciplinary courses.
- Review committees for each Skill, Core, and special subject requirement would be convened. They would be composed of two or three faculty members from departments represented in that area, skill, or special requirement. The Committee on Committees, in conjunction with the GE Committee, would solicit volunteers, nominate candidates, and approve these review committees.
- Departments would be asked to resubmit all courses presently on the list for review and possible reclassification. Departments would be given a 3-year time frame in which to accomplish this task. Courses not resubmitted would be retired after 3 years.

- Departments and divisions would be encouraged to review their current curricula with an eye toward developing new two-course sequences targeted specifically at the revised GE descriptions.
- □ Each department would designate a faculty GE representative as a standing service assignment delineated in its bylaws. These GE liaisons be responsible for advising students about the criteria a GE course must meet, and for endorsing student petitions approved by departmental liaisons.

6.0 GENERAL EDUCATION SEMINARS FOR FRESHMEN

Based on reports from our GE Task force student representatives as well as reports from WASC focus groups, we were persuaded that many freshmen would profit from academic instruction from UCSB faculty in small classroom settings. To address this need, we endorsed a pilot program of GE Seminars for Freshmen, partially funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the College of Letters and Science.

The intent of the Freshman seminars is to give students a chance to have an engaged relationship with their educational experience. Each seminar satisfies one area of GE and also meets the criteria for a GE Writing Intensive course. Class size is limited to eighteen students, freshman status required. Faculty design GE seminar courses in ways that provide freshmen with an understanding of the issues in an academic field, including how questions are framed and answers are sought, validated, and presented. The small-class setting provides students with practice and experience in critical reading, writing, and speaking. Students have multiple opportunities to take responsibility for learning and for practicing skills of argument in vigorous discussion.

We believe that the intellectual skills and attitudes acquired in this setting can potentially have a transformative effect on a student's subsequent educational experience. The number of seminars remains very small (ten were offered in 2001-2002; eleven are planned for 2002-2003); at this level, the program is available to 5% of the freshman class.

7.0 NEW CLIMATE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our deliberations have caused us to question the pedagogical effectiveness of the high proportion of large courses, and we hope that the rethinking of GE will set in motion a campus-wide discussion of how to make large lecture classes engaging academic experiences for undergraduates. We are concerned about student attitudes and behavior in some large classes, and we want the revised GE program to articulate an appreciation for the communal nature of education and an acceptance of the obligations that bind every individual student who works within the UCSB community.

The General Education Task Force has been acutely aware of the obstacles to reform of General Education. At 19:1, UCSB has a higher student to faculty ratio than all but three universities of the top 50 in the *US News and World Report* rankings of national universities with doctoral programs (see http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/natudoc/tier1/t1natudoc.htm. The College of Letters and Science, which provides *all* General Education courses, operates with an even higher overall student-faculty ratio (approximately 23:1 in the year 2000). Many departments are so pressed to provide classes for their majors that they cannot at this time consider making a stronger contribution to General Education. Only 6 of the top 50 national universities with doctoral programs had a higher percentage than UCSB of courses with enrollments over 50, and only 11 campuses had a lower percentage than UCSB of courses with enrollments under 20.

Without an effective GE administrative unit, without committed faculty and well-prepared teaching assistants, and without the funding and incentives that these would require, any attempts at GE reform are likely to be useless. Other campuses have been able to support the transformation of the undergraduate curriculum because of visionary moves on the part of their senior administration: the Stanford faculty, for example, was increased by 12 FTE in exchange for their agreement to make a significant commitment to offering freshman seminars. UCLA departments that offer writing-intensive courses of the sort we have proposed for our Core receive additional funding so that TA's have classes limited to 20 students, as well as instruction in responding to writing, provided through the office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies.

In the course of discussions among ourselves and with individuals, departments, and divisions, options for future developments in General Education have been raised. Possibilities have been broached for a more extensive requirement in the sciences. We would hope that a proposal for an expanded requirement would be more analytical than the present one, rather than just larger. A split between physical and life sciences has been conventional in some universities, and a two-course requirement in each of those areas may be a next step if science departments are able to provide substantially more courses designed for non-majors. Or perhaps there may be other foci that would provide the kind of broad disciplinary insight that is in line with the goals of this GE program. Some have urged a requirement in "global studies" as a needed integrative kind of course dealing with processes not adequately accounted for in curricula devoted to more specific geographies, cultures, and histories. That too may be a worthwhile addition. Ultimately, of course, no curriculum is adequate to the profundities of knowledge.

The Task Force is persuaded the academic plan we recommend is intellectually viable and that the associated management plan will ensure ongoing high quality and needed innovation. Any good GE program is *always* under reconsideration. Any campus concerned with the quality of undergraduate education will ensure that GE quality is the business of the entire faculty, of all departments, and of all academic administrators.

PRESENT GE PROGRAM FOR B.A.		PRESENT GE FOR B.F.A. and B.M.	PRESENT GE FOR B.S.	TASK FORCE PROPOSAL	
SKILLS		SKILLS	SKILLS	SKILLS	
A. Reading and Comp.	2 courses	Same as B.A.	Same as B.A.	Writing	2 courses
B. Foreign Language	several options	Same as B.A.	Same as B.A.	Foreign Language	no change
C. Quantitative	1 designated course in area C	Same as B.A.	Same as B.A.	Quantitative	no change
CORE		CORE	CORE	CORE	
C. Science/Math/Technology	y 3 courses	2 courses	3 courses	Science/Math	2 courses
D. Social Science	3 courses	2 courses	2 courses	Social Science	2 courses
E1. Western Civ.	2 courses	2 courses from E	2 courses from E	Historical Studies	2 courses
E2. World Civ/Thought	1 course	third course waived	third course waived	included in Historical S	tudies
F Arts	2 courses	waived	1 course	Arts	2 courses
G. Literature	2 courses	1 course	1 course	Lit./Textual Studies	2 courses
SPECIAL REQUIREMENT	`S	SPECIAL REQ.	SPECIAL REQ.	SPECIAL REQ.	
GE Writing	6 courses	Same as B.A.	Same as B.A.	Reformulated	
Western Civ.	2 courses in Area E-1	Same as B.A.	Same as B.A.	1 course in any Core area	
Non-Western Culture	1 course	Same as B.A.	Same as B.A.	Not included	
Ethnicity	1 course	Same as B.A.	Same as B.A.	No change	
CORE REQUIR	RED: 13	CORE REQUIRED: 9 (2 in Arts fulfilled within the major)	CORE REQUIRED: 9	CORE REQUIRED: 10	