

DRAFT

Academic Senate  
Santa Barbara Division

General Education Committee

**To: Walter Yuen**  
Chair, Academic Senate

**From: Harold Marcuse**  
Chair, 2001-2002 GE Committee

**Date: September 30, 2002**

**Re: GE Committee Annual Report for 2001-2002**

This past year departments were asked to minimize the submission of courses for inclusion in the GE list because of the anticipated vote of the faculty on major revisions to the current GE program. Authorization of that ballot, originally planned for the 8 November 2001 meeting of the legislature, was first postponed until March 2002, then until May, when the Faculty Legislature finally authorized it at a special meeting. However, the vote itself was then postponed, at least until November 2002, because of procedural problems, namely the need for pro and con statements to accompany the ballots.

The work of the GE Committee during the 2001-2002 academic year thus focused on preparation for the implementation of the new system. Only 20 petitions from departments were submitted, about 1/3 of the usual number. The chair and writing program representative Nick Tingle took care of straightforward cases, leaving only a handful that needed consideration by the full committee. In the end, after faculty and departments made necessary modifications, all were approved. Please see Appendix A for a tabular summary.

The Committee held only 3 full meetings, in November, March and April. All were devoted primarily to issues raised by the GE Task Force report and its potential implementation. At the first meeting we discussed three areas of concern that had emerged at a 16 October 2001 Open Forum on the GE Task Force report hosted by the Academic Senate: 1) worries about the recommended position of a faculty director of GE, 2) concern about the disappearance of a specific "Western Civilization" requirement within the area of "Civilization and Thought," and 3) concern about the phrasing of the ethnicity requirement. These concerns are summarized in a 16 October 2001 memo from Dean Wyner to Executive Committee chair Stephen Weatherford, and reiterated in a 22 January 2002 memo from Weatherford to Task Force chair Muriel Zimmerman. A fourth point of concern, the reduction of the number of required science and mathematics courses from 3 to 2, was not discussed in depth at that time.

Given the apparent lack of information among the faculty, we decided to make another, even more concerted effort to solicit responses. Departments were requested to discuss the Task Force report and respond by the end of January 2002. This call generated a large amount of new feedback, which took the form of two "volumes" (photocopied packets) of comments discussed by the Task Force in a 15 February 2002 meeting. The GE committee's March and April meetings centered on its position regarding these issues.

Re 1): Members of the administration reacted negatively to the idea of what they termed a "GE Czar." I wish to note that the GE committee previously expressed its strongest support for this position. I quote from former chair Ursula Mahlendorf's June 2001 memo to Senate Chair Richard Watts, reporting on the GE committee meeting of 6 June 2001: "We wish to emphasize

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particularly, however, that none of the recommendations of the Taskforce should be adopted by the Senate unless the recommended administrative office at Dean's level with adequate staff support is made available by the UCSB administration" (emphasis in original).

Re 2) and 3): Within the task force a compromise had been reached, whereby faculty in the sciences would accept a reduction of the number of required courses in their area ("C") from 3 to 2 only if a similar reduction and simplification happened in humanities (area "E"). In an effort to appease an apparently small but vocal minority of humanities faculty the task force proposal was modified to include a vestige of "Western Civilization" as a "special area requirement" (similar to the ampersanded and asterisked courses presently). At this juncture faculty in the science departments were alerted and threatened to withdraw their support.

With the fragile compromises threatening to break down, the GE committee met again on 11 March 2002 to discuss our own position. We decided that we the committee still supported the task force proposal, and that should reiterate our committee's endorsement of the task force report by the GE committee under Ursula Mahlendorf on 6 June 2001, as well as the report's recent modifications, explicitly addressing some of the more controversial findings and recommendations. A final version of the memo, which I have drafted September 18, is appended to this report (Appendix B).

Additionally, in order to address questions and allay fears about how the proposed changes might affect specific departments, the members of the committee decided that we should draft some recommendations regarding the transition to the new program. I circulated drafts of "response" and "implementation" memos on 2 April, and the committee discussed and approved them with slight modifications at its 18 April meeting. GE Task Force chair Muriel Zimmerman received copies of the drafts.

Although time constraints (publication deadline by 14 May for the 30 May 2002 meeting of the legislature) and other business prevented me from circulating final versions of those memos until now, Muriel incorporated most of the implementation recommendations as section 5.3 of the new "General Education Task Force Recommendation Report" of 6 May 2002. It remains a crucial task of the successor to the GE committee to solicit feedback from the Dean's office on these implementation suggestions. If available, this information could be made available prior to the ballot. Even if the ballot does not pass, the new committee may implement some aspects of the Task Force's recommendations, and an implementation plan will still be needed.

Since a vote on the reformed GE program has been postponed for so long, and because its passage is uncertain, I have been working with Dean Wyner to develop a procedure that would mitigate one of the problematic aspects of the current program: the proliferation of approved courses on the GE list. Several times each year exceptional cases arise in which students wish to use non-approved courses to satisfy requirements. In the interest of equity this committee's policy has been to approve only courses that are acceptable for the GE list for everyone. It has not entertained individual petitions, instead requiring departments to go through the petition process for the entire course (see the June 19, 2000 GE committee annual report, page 1, item 3). In the absence of a rigorous GE program with some oversight, however, and given the precedents set by the inclusion of many other courses, almost any course can qualify. Thus many, many courses are on the GE list only because one or a few students wanted to use it to satisfy a requirement.

My working agreement with the Dean is that he will collect such cases and call me (or the chair of the new CUAPP, or that chair's designee) over to review student files as necessary. Over time

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this should set precedents with which his staff can work when advising students. I would like to note that this procedure is an informal attempt to address the problem that would be solved by the 6 May 2002 Task Force report's section 5.2A, Flexibility Option for the B.A. degree. At the 30 May 2002 Legislature meeting this provision was not authorized to be included on the ballot. A future committee may wish to formalize the procedure I am initiating by adopting the policy described in that section.

The following is a list of the members of the 2001-2002 General Education Committee in alphabetical order:

- Omer Blaes (Physics)
- Peter Digeser (Political Science)
- Larry Gerstein (Mathematics)
- Barbara Holdrege (Religious Studies),
- Ursula Mahlendorf (Germanic/Slavic/Semitic Studies)
- Laurie Monahan (History of Art & Architecture)
- Nick Tingle (Writing Program)
- Esmeralda Rendon (AS Representative)
- Paul Spickard (History)
- Katie Wallace (AS Representative)
- Rodger Wood (Computer Science)

Consultants:

- Britt Johnson (College of Letters and Science)
- Jacqueline Hynes (College of Engineering)
- Patrick McNulty (Office of the Registrar)
- Muriel Zimmerman (Writing), GE Task Force Chair

Respectfully submitted,

Harold Marcuse

Attachments: Appendix A: Courses submitted for GE area and special subject approval  
Appendix B: GE committee response to GE Task Force report and supplements

## Appendix A

Table #1

## Courses Submitted for GE Area Approval

<i>Area</i>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E1</b>	<b>E2</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	
<i>Approved</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Denied</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>

Table #2

## Courses submitted for GE Special Subject Requirements

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>WRT</b>	<b>NWC</b>	<b>QR</b>	<b>ETH</b>	<b>AH&amp;I</b>
<b>Approved</b>	<b>14*</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Denied</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14*</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\* Two requested removal of the writing requirement.