

# **General Education Oversight Committee**

## **Report of Activities July 2011–June 2012**

### **Introduction**

The General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) consisting of chairs and co-chairs of ten GEOC Subcommittees—Content Areas 1 (Arts & Humanities), 2 (Social Sciences), 3 (Science & Technology), 4 (Diversity and Multiculturalism/Intl); Competencies: W, Q, Second Language, Information Literacy, Computer Technology); and Assessment; and three ex-officio members (the directors of the W and Q Centers and a representative of the Senate C&CC), one of which has also served as subcommittee co-chair, continues to function well. The current general education program has been implemented for six years. A substantial number of general education courses are in place and the total is approaching steady-state.

The general education program must remain rigorous and innovative, while incorporating changing pedagogy and uses of technology, and also continuing to adjust to the changing needs of students and society. Therefore, new or revised Gen Ed courses will be proposed for years to come while some of the current Gen Ed courses may rarely be offered or will be dropped from the Gen Ed program altogether.

Four courses that propose to simultaneously meet the guidelines of multiple content areas have been awarded funding by the review committee for the Provost's General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition in 2011. One of these is a new course that has begun to be offered, although it has not achieved its original goal of qualifying for three content areas. Two others will be new courses, and the fourth is a revision of an existing course.

The GEOC continues to review and approve new and revised general education courses, but its attention is increasingly devoted to developing tools to assess the effectiveness of the overall general education program, monitor its implementation, and insure that very high quality is maintained. This report summarizes both operation of the program and activities of the GEOC during the current academic year.

### **General Education Course Approvals**

The general education curriculum has matured and now contains 346 content area courses (3 more than last year) and 494 skill code courses (6 more than last year). While growth in the total number of courses has slowed, a number of courses are revised every year. In the AY 2011-2012, 57 proposals were received, resulting in the addition of 7 new courses to the curriculum; 10 existing courses being revised; and 3 courses dropped from the curriculum. Thirty of the 50 proposals are still in the review process, many of them GEOC-approved courses that have not yet reached review by the Senate.

The breakdown of courses approved by the Senate by content area and competency is given in Table 1. Since some courses are included in more than one category, the totals are less than the sum of the individual categories.

Table 1. *Numbers of courses now approved for the general education curriculum (as of the February 27, 2012 Senate meeting)*

Content Area/Competency	1000-level courses	2000+level courses	Total number of courses
CA1 Arts and Humanities	88	66	154
CA2 Social Sciences	48	15	63
CA3 Science and Technology	52	4	56
CA4 Diversity & Multiculturalism	67	96	163
<b>Total content area courses *</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>346</b>
Quantitative	46	34	80
Writing	26	390	416
<b>Total skill courses **</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>494</b>

\* totals are less than the sum of content area courses as 90 (1000-level= 60; 2000+level=30) CA4 courses are also CA1, 2 or 3. 73 (1000-level= 7; 2000+level= 66) CA4 courses are ONLY CA4.

\*\* totals are less than the sum of skill courses as 2 (2000+level) courses are Q and W.

Overall total of courses in the gen ed curriculum are less than the sum of the CA/skill categories as many Content Area courses are also skill courses.

The GEOC also reviews proposals to offer existing General Education courses in intensive sessions (4 weeks or less). The breakdown of these reviews since 2005, including 7 submitted this year, is given in Table 2. Courses are approved either fully or provisionally, depending on the measure of assurance GEOC has that the Gen Ed objectives of a given course can be maintained in the shortened course format. GEOC has collected faculty reports on provisionally approved intersession courses offered more than 2 times in a condensed format and uses this information to determine whether a course should be re-categorized to “fully approved.”

Table 2. *General Education Courses Reviewed for Intensive Session Teaching 2005–2012*

Course disposition	
Approved	55
Provisionally approved	7
Rejected	8

## General Education Program Implementation

The number of General Education course offerings on all UConn campuses declined at a very slow rate during the previous three years: 2,087 courses (1,034+1,053) in Fall and Spring 2008-09, 2,073 (1,015+1,058) in Fall and Spring 2009-10, and 2,030 (1,000+1,030) in Fall and Spring 2010-11. (see numbers at the bottom right in Tables 6a and 6b). However, this trend reversed during the past year: 2,109 (1,042+1,067) in Fall and Spring 2011-12. At the same time, the General Education courses that are taught are increasing in size. Tables 3 (F 2011) and 4 (S 2012) show the breakdown of course sections and enrollments by General Education category and campus. The individual sections counted in Tables 3 and indicate 5,306 (2,744+2,562) course sections compared to (4,893 (2,528+2,365) and 4,715 (2,452 + 2,263) for the previous two years. Since some Gen Ed courses are included in more than one Content Area, the actual total of Content Area offerings is a bit lower than the number shown in Tables 3 and 4. The same goes for the actual total of the overall Gen Ed offerings since some Content Area courses are also listed as W or Q courses.

Although the tables appear to show an annual total enrollment of 130,511 (68,404+62,107), some of the courses and respective enrollment were counted for two Content Areas, if one was CA4, and also for a Competency (Q or W). The actual physical seats taken in AY 2011–12 were 96,629 (50,501 in Fall 2011 and 46,128 in Spring 2012) a 3.5% increase over 2010-11. Overall, the capacity of offerings in all categories seems

adequate to meet the needs of our undergraduate population (annual admissions of approximately 3,200+ students at the freshman level).

Table 3. *General Education courses (sections) offered (C) and enrollment (E) by campus and category. Fall 2011 (Individual sections of courses (discussion sections, labs, etc.) are counted as separate courses. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted.)*

**Note:** Actual Physical Seats are 50,501. The higher 68,404 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses.

Campus	Avery Point		Hartford		Stamford		Storrs		Torrington		Waterbury		All campuses	
GenEd category	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
Arts and Hum	27	712	35	1009	23	713	301	9936	13	162	26	710	425	13242
Social Sciences	18	543	30	1023	26	848	232	9714	6	143	20	655	332	12926
Sci and Tech	6	195	7	283	8	257	111	3197	1	40	4	206	137	4178
Sci and Tech Lab	18	306	56	531	12	268	291	5319	4	49	14	297	395	6770
Div and Multi	11	194	16	322	24	288	120	3451	9	124	15	323	195	4702
Div and Multi Int	14	431	14	467	10	342	171	5937	4	69	10	315	223	7591
<b>Total Cont Area</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>2381</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>3635</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2716</b>	<b>1226</b>	<b>37584</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>2506</b>	<b>1707</b>	<b>49409</b>
<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1122</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>10342</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>13338</b>
Writ 1000- lev	3	57	7	124	2	34	19	356	2	12	2	37	35	620
Writ 2000+ lev	6	109	12	182	18	248	308	4332	3	33	8	133	355	5037
<b>Total Writing</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>4688</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>5657</b>
<b>Total GenEd</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>3078</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>5063</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>3636</b>	<b>2051</b>	<b>52614</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>3233</b>	<b>2744</b>	<b>68404</b>

Table 4. *General Education courses (sections) offered (C) and enrollment (E) by campus and category. Spring 2012 (Individual sections of courses (discussion sections, labs, etc.) are counted as separate courses. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted.)*

**Note:** Actual Physical Seats are 46,128. The higher 62,107 figure is due to courses that have multiple gen ed attributes and cross-listed courses.

Campus	Avery Point		Hartford		Stamford		Storrs		Torrington		Waterbury		All campuses	
GenEd category	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E	C	E
Arts and Hum	21	571	38	925	21	647	273	9003	6	110	23	569	382	11825
Social Sciences	18	570	31	1055	22	795	249	9165	7	139	23	703	350	12457
Sci and Tech	2	63	4	180	4	130	66	2822	1	24	3	136	80	3355
Sci and Tech Lab	14	250	47	449	13	267	253	4461	4	68	13	271	344	5766
Div and Multi	11	238	11	249	9	233	101	3214	2	37	6	160	140	4131
Div and Multi Int	10	277	15	470	12	357	124	5137	2	32	11	284	174	6557
<b>Total Cont Area</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>1969</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>3328</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>2429</b>	<b>1066</b>	<b>33802</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>2123</b>	<b>1470</b>	<b>44061</b>
<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>9025</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>11049</b>
Writ 1000- lev	3	57	9	167	0	0	31	579	1	16	4	76	48	895
Writ 2000+ lev	11	127	13	198	20	319	397	5201	9	68	11	189	461	6102
<b>Total Writing</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>5780</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>6997</b>
<b>Total GenEd</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>2616</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>4083</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>3356</b>	<b>1942</b>	<b>48607</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>2875</b>	<b>2562</b>	<b>62107</b>

The enrollment data also allow the calculation of average enrollment in General Education courses in each category. The averages have barely changed since last year. In Table 5, individual sections of a course are

counted as separate classes. Courses that were listed in the Schedule of Classes but then had zero enrollment are not counted. The average of 2000+ level W courses is distorted by the fact that independent study and senior thesis W courses (often having an enrollment of only 1–3 students as opposed to the usual enrollment of 19 per W section) are included in the course count. Thus, the actual enrollment numbers for Gen Ed courses are higher than the ones listed in Table 5. Traditionally, larger lectures are more likely to be found in Storrs than at the regional campuses. CA 4 (Diversity and Multiculturalism) courses in the international category have been the largest each year. Enrollment statistics for each semester further indicate that W-sections tend to fill up to but rarely exceed the cap of 19 students. With very few exceptions, departments and instructors have respected this cap.

A continuing concern is whether enough seats in W classes are available for students to enroll in a “writing in the major” course and a second W class within eight semesters that may also include a semester abroad. There are a number of opinions but very few facts on this issue. The GEOC will attempt to work with the Office of Institutional Research and the Registrar over the summer to develop empirical evidence on this issue.

Table 5. Average class size for General Education classes, 2011-2012

**Note:** Individual sections of courses (discussion sections, labs, etc.) are counted as separate classes. Courses with zero enrollment have not been counted. The average of 2000+ level W courses is distorted by the fact that independent study and senior theses W courses are included in the course count.

Campus	Storrs	All Regionals	All Campuses
GenEd category			
Arts and Hum	33	26	31
Social Sciences	39	32	37
Sci and Tech	34	39	35
Sci and Tech Lab	18	14	17
Div and Multi	30	19	26
Div and Multi Intl	38	30	36
<b>Total Cont Area</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>
Writing 1000-lev	19	18	18
Writing 2000+ lev	14	14	14
<b>Total Writing</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total GenEd</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>

**Note:** AY11–12 totals nearly the same as AY10–11 and AY09–10.

The Senate-approved General Education Guidelines recommend that most general education courses be taught by full-time faculty. In AY 2011–2012, this was true for approximately 49-53 % (depending on the semester) of all Gen Ed courses (see Tables 6a and 6b). This fraction is a comparable to last year when 49–51% of courses were taught by full-time faculty, less than AY 2009-10 (54-57), but a bit more than AY 2008-2009 when the percentages were 46. Full-time faculty taught approximately one-third of general education courses at the regional campuses and about 60 % of courses at the Storrs campus. However, the category of full-time faculty includes non-tenured and non-tenure-track lecturers and Assistant Professors in Residence (APiRs). The latter are hired on contracts for up to three years and often report feeling overwhelmed by their teaching loads of seven courses per year. While adjunct instructors and GAs may be extremely competent teachers, they are likely to be less integrated into the teaching mission of the institution and require and deserve support and supervision to ensure maintenance of teaching standards and fulfillment of courses goals.

Since class sizes and credit loads vary, it was also of interest to compare these teaching contributions on the basis of student credit hour production (Table 7). While this does not influence the data much at the regional

campuses, the number of students taught by faculty at the Storrs campus rises significantly, because faculty tend to teach the larger classes. When all faculty ranks are considered, faculty teach almost two thirds of students' general education programs at Storrs.

Table 6a. *General Education classes by instructor rank at each campus Fall 2011 (% of total)*

**Note:** only the credit bearing portion of courses is counted for the figures below.

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. faculty	Total Courses
Avery Point	7.6	6.3	5.1	3.8	22.8	62	10.1	5.1	77.2	79
Hartford	7.4	10.7	5.7	0.8	24.6	59.8	14.8	0.8	75.4	122
Stamford	6.9	25.7	6.9	1	40.5	53.5	5	1	59.5	101
Torrington	6.7	0	3.3	16.7	26.7	66.7	6.7	0	73.4	30
Waterbury	10	11.3	5	10	36.3	50	12.5	1.3	63.8	80
<b>All Regionals (avg)</b>	7.8	12.9	5.6	4.4	30.6	57.3	10.4	1.7	69.4	82.4
<b>Storrs</b>	23.2	16.3	17.1	4.3	60.9	11.6	23.7	3.8	39.1	630
<b>All campuses</b>	17.1	15	12.6	4.4	48.9	29.7	18.4	3	51.1	1042

Table 6b. *General Education classes by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2012 (% of total)*

**Note:** only the credit bearing portion of courses is counted for the figures below.

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. faculty	Total Courses
Avery Point	8	6.7	6.7	2.7	24	65.3	8	2.7	76	75
Hartford	5.4	8.1	5.4	0	18.9	63.1	17.1	0.9	81.1	111
Stamford	8.9	26.7	8.9	1.1	45.6	46.7	6.7	1.1	54.4	90
Torrington	3.8	3.8	3.8	19.2	30.8	69.2	0	0	69.2	26
Waterbury	12.3	11	1.4	13.7	38.4	45.2	16.4	0	61.6	73
<b>All Regionals (avg)</b>	8	12.5	5.6	4.8	30.9	56.5	11.5	1.1	69.1	375
<b>Storrs</b>	19.1	18.6	22.7	4.2	64.6	13	20.8	1.6	35.4	692
<b>All campuses</b>	15.2	16.5	16.7	4.4	52.8	28.3	17.5	1.4	47.2	1067

Table 7a. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Fall 2011 (% of total)*

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. fac.	Total Credit Hours
Avery Point	6.6	5.1	5.7	7.7	25.1	57.9	13	4	74.9	6946
Hartford	8.6	11.1	5	.4	25.1	60.3	14.2	0.4	74.9	12372
Stamford	8.7	23.5	9.4	1.2	42.8	50.6	5.6	1	57.2	9044
Torrington	4	0	2.3	12.1	18.4	77.9	3.7	0	81.6	1713
Waterbury	8.9	15.7	6.8	11.2	42.6	45.5	10.7	1.3	57.5	7963
<b>All Regionals (avg)</b>	7.4	11.1	5.8	6.5	30.8	58.4	9.4	1.3	69.2	7608
<b>Storrs</b>	27.7	13.6	21.6	6.3	69.2	14.1	13.4	3.4	30.9	123667
<b>All campuses</b>	23.1	13.5	18.0	5.9	60.5	23.8	12.7	2.9	29.5	161705

Table 7b. *General Education credit hour production by instructor rank at each campus Spring 2012 (% of total)*

Campus	Asst Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Instructor /Lecturer	Total full-t. faculty	Adjunct	GA	Other	Total part-t. faculty	Total Credit Hours
Avery Point	8.3	3.5	7.6	3.9	23.2	65.9	8.6	2.3	76.8	6227
Hartford	5.6	8.7	4.6	0	19	59.7	20.5	0.9	81	10738
Stamford	9.9	23.6	8.8	1.2	43.4	49.5	6.2	0.9	56.6	7962
Torrington	1.1	2.8	2	18.3	24.1	75.9	0	0	75.9	1380
Waterbury	14	11.8	3.5	15.3	44.7	43.4	11.9	0	55.3	6828
<b>All Regionals (avg)</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>6627</b>
<b>Storrs</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>114531</b>
<b>All campuses</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>147666</b>

### General Education Course Substitutions

According to the General Education Guidelines, schools and colleges have the explicit authority to make substitutions to the requirements for individual students admitted to the respective school or college. The Registrar’s office kindly supplies GEOC with a list of all substitutions made for enrolled students during the academic year. These numbers are relatively small (fewer than 300 in AY 2011-12) relative to the numbers of general education courses taken, and this number has been declining (317 in AY 2010-11).

Table 8. *Substitutions to the General Education Requirements by School or College*

	# subs
ACES	4
CANR	51
BUSN	12
CLAS	124
CTED	26
EDUC	11
EGBU	0
ENGR	10
FNAR	21
NURS	7
PHAR	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>

Note: all but the following schools saw a decrease in substitutions: CANR, EDUC, ENGR, and FINA.,

Table 9. *Substitutions to the General Education Requirements by Category*

Category	Substitutions granted
CA1	24
CA2	24
CA3	48
CA4	118
Q	10
W	28
Second Language	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>

Substitutions for transfer students at the time of admission for courses transferred in that are not a match of existing University of Connecticut courses are potentially a much larger number than the number processed for already enrolled students. Data on the numbers and distribution across content areas and competencies is not yet available to GEOC. The GEOC office is working with the University’s Office of Institutional Research to capture this information.

Another source of general education credits is through the Early College Experience program. These are University of Connecticut courses taught by high school teachers throughout the State under the supervision of University departments. Over eight thousand students are enrolled in Early College Experience courses, and a substantial fraction of those students will enroll at the University of Connecticut. A few students take as many as three semesters of University of Connecticut course credits while still in high school.

Because many Early College Experience courses also are general education courses, the GEOC chair accepted a position on the Early College Experience Program advisory board. Last Fall the University’s Office of Institutional Research to gathered data on the number of general education requirements taken as Early College Experience courses by matriculating students. These results are summarized in Table 10. Although a number of these students took more than one general education course, many of them took two or more courses in the same discipline (biology, for example), and will still be required to take at least six general education courses as undergraduates.

Table 10. *ECE transfers into General Education Requirements by Category*  
Fall 2011

Category	Substitutions granted
CA1	253
CA2	106
CA3	64
CA3–Lab	476
CA4	14
CA4–Intl	8
<b>Content Area Total</b>	<b>921</b>
Q	589
W	43
<b>Competency Total</b>	<b>632</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,553</b>

The GEOC and the Early College Experience Program Advisory Board also plans to work with the Office of Institutional Research to evaluate how well students who meet general education competency course requirements while in high school do in more advanced courses taken after matriculation at the University compared to students whose requisite courses are taken on University of Connecticut campuses.

### **Provost’s General Education Course Competition**

The annual General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition is designed to promote the ongoing enhancement, innovation, improvement, and academic rigor of the content and teaching of UConn’s General Education curriculum. Since 2004, this grant program has tremendously enriched UConn’s General Education program and simultaneously the overall undergraduate program.

In Spring 2011, the Provost’s General Education Course Enhancement Grant Competition was held for the ninth time. A total of seven proposals were received and six of those were funded (one fewer than last year).

This year, for the first time, faculty were able to propose developing courses that propose to simultaneously meet the guidelines for two of content areas one, two, and three or two of those three content areas plus content area four. Four of the six funded proposals intend to develop multiple content area courses—one for CA2 and CA3, one for CA2, CA3, and CA4 and two for CA1, CA2, and CA4.

Table 11. *Courses developed through the support of the Provost’s Competition by Gen Ed category*

Category	Grants Funded 2004-2011	2012 Winners
CA1	30	
CA2	17	
CA3	11	3
CA4	36	
Q	9	1
W	19	
Sec Lang	1	
Totals	76	4

**Note:** the “Totals” row figures represent individual grant projects funded. These totals are less than the sum of each category as many courses have multiple gen ed attributes.

## Oversight

Part of GEOC’s mandate from the Senate is “monitoring periodically courses that satisfy General Education requirements to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria adopted by the Senate” (*General Education Guidelines*). As reported last year: “GEOC has developed a smaller-scale recertification plan and opted for a staggered and sample approach that would still allow monitoring the quality of the Gen Ed program and help stimulate departmental conversations about the purpose and quality of their Gen Ed offerings. Thus, a sampling of courses - rather than all Gen Ed courses - will need to be recertified in an overall recertification process that is spread over a five-year cycle.”

This year, the GEOC moved to implement this plan. The Assessment Subcommittee has noted that “monitoring the quality” of courses is closely linked to assessment, and that what the proposed survey instrument is designed to do is inquire whether a course, as taught, is aligned with (that is corresponds to) the course objectives and general education guidelines it proposed to deliver when it was approved. The plan is to obtain information about the delivery of content area and competency course categories rather than to reapprove (or not) the general education offering status of individual courses. Hence, the term “recertification” is not an accurate description of what is proposed. Therefore, this monitoring program has been renamed the alignment survey.

In parallel with the plan to gather data on how courses are being taught, the GEOC continues the ongoing effort to develop assessment tools designed to reveal whether what students learn from the courses they select achieves goals that are the purpose of general education.

## Alignment Survey

The GEOC contracted with University Information Technology Services to develop a flexible online survey to gather information about sampled courses. The survey asks open-ended questions about the relationship between the course content and delivery and both the overall general education guidelines and also the specific guidelines for the content areas and competencies that a course is approved for. The survey also includes the current draft of learning outcomes (that continue to be refined) for the content areas and asks whether the course contains any exam questions, projects, or written assignments intended to measure whether students have achieved these outcomes. The current survey does not ask for the results of general education measures; it only asks whether some form of measurement is attempted. Last spring GEOC conducted a pilot

survey with three departments. During the fall, we revised our survey, and we plan to undertake a regular program of surveys beginning this spring.

Between 12 and 17 departments that offer general education courses will be selected each year to participate in the general education alignment survey. A sample of courses offered by each participating department will be selected to include:

- The general education course with the largest enrollment
- At least one example of each content area and competency offered
- At least one example of a course offered at a regional campus

Random sampling will be used for content areas and competencies that are represented in multiple courses offered by the department (two courses will be sampled and the department will be asked to choose one of the two). We also will be asking departments separately to review their information literacy offerings. Information literacy is an important component of general education, but it generally is not associated with a single departmental course and often is incorporated into courses that are not otherwise identified with general education.

The cumulative data gathered from departmental samples will permit the GEOC to report on the extent to which general education courses collectively continue to be consistent with the guidelines that were the basis for their approval as general education offerings. Courses approved for content area one, Arts and Humanities, and content area four, Multiculturalism and Diversity both require satisfying one of five possible guidelines. Once enough departments have been surveyed, it will be possible to report what fractions of courses in these content areas focus on each of the possible guidelines.

The survey is oriented toward evaluating content areas and competencies, and a question of interest is: to what extent does the teaching of general education courses, especially those approved several years ago, continue to conform to the description and justification in the approved course action request. Should the survey reveal that a surveyed course is diverging from the general education guidelines, the GEOC will work with the department and faculty to restore the course to the proper alignment. Nevertheless, the implications of this question are large. If it appears that a large fraction of general education courses have diverged from the guidelines, then the process of reviewing general education courses, the resources devoted to oversight, and possibly the structure of the general education program itself would have to be reconsidered.

## **Assessment**

Efforts continue to develop methods to measure general education learning outcomes specific to the intent of content area and competency courses. Content area one has not progressed as far as the other three. This year the CA1 co-chairs conducted interviews with instructors of a range of arts and humanities courses similar to the interviews previously conducted for the other content areas, and completed the first stage of specifying learning outcomes. Next year, the same investigators will undertake an investigation of a number of liberal arts and humanities courses taken by students in a variety of majors to determine how and where they addressed these CA1 learning outcomes in their courses and the extent to which they assess whether students achieve these objectives. The GEOC will also seek investigators to conduct a similar study for CA4, multiculturalism and diversity.

This year the GEOC took a pause in assessing writing competency at the department level. We expect to resume that effort next year. The quantitative competency committee is reviewing a Web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system known as ALEKS. ALEKS appears to be a promising tool for verifying students' preparation for calculus courses and providing some remedial support for students who are weak in some mathematical skills required for success in calculus courses. ALEKS potentially can make our offerings of

quantitative courses more cost effective and may have some capacity for assessing achievement of quantitative competency.

Once a number of faculty are using assessment tools in general education courses, the GEOC will offer workshops to gauge how these efforts are working and how much confidence there is that the assessment measures represent learning outcomes that are aligned with general education guidelines. The GEOC will then be in a position to ascertain whether general education is succeeding as envisioned and what adjustments in the program might be warranted.

#### **GEOC Committee Members 2011–2012 Academic Year**

Murphy Sewall, Chair ('13)	MKTG
John Ayers ('12)	ECE
Rosa Helena Chinchilla ('13)	MCL
Robert Cromley ('12)	GEOG
Thomas Deans (W Center Director, ex officio)	ENGL
Francoise Dussart ('12)	ANTH
Elizabeth Jockusch ('12)	EEB
Richard Jones ('12)	PHYS
Peter Kaminsky ('12)	MUSC
Thomas Long ('14)	NURS
Wally Madych ('12)	MATH
Olivier Morand ('12)	ECON
Suresh Nair ('12)	OPIM
Gustavo Nanclares ('14)	MCL
Xae Alicia Reyes ('13)	EDCI
Thomas Roby (Q Center Director, ex officio)	MATH
Eric Schultz (Senate C&CC, ex officio- Fall 2011)	EEB
Blanca Silvestrini ('12)	HIST
Alexander Shvartsman ('12)	CSE
Robert Stephens ('12)	MUSC
Sarah Winter ('13)	ENGL
Michael F. Young ('13)	EPSY
Erin Eighan (Graduate Student Rep)	
Elizabeth Golas (Undergraduate Student Rep)	
Anabel Perez (Administrator)	

## **GEOC Subcommittee Members 2011-2012 Academic Year**

### ***Arts and Humanities***

Peter Kaminsky, Co-Chair  
Francoise Dussart, Co-Chair  
Gustavo Nanclares  
Jonathan Hufstader

### ***Assessment***

Murphy Sewall, Chair  
H. Jane Rogers  
Felicia Pratto  
Desmond McCaffrey

### ***Social Sciences***

Robert Cromley, Co-Chair  
Olivier Morand, Co-Chair  
David Atkin  
Linda Lee  
Jeremy Pressman  
Charles Venator

### ***Information Literacy***

Sarah Winter, Co-Chair  
Michael F. Young, Co-Chair  
Shikha Sharma  
Andrea Hubbard  
Carolyn Lin  
Susanna Cowan

### ***Science and Technology***

Elizabeth Jockusch, Co-Chair  
John Ayers, Co-Chair  
Adam Fry  
Tom Meyer  
John Varkonda (student rep)

### ***Second Language***

Rosa Helena Chinchilla, Co-Chair  
Gustavo Nanclares, Co-Chair  
Brian Boecherer  
Kenneth Fuchsman  
Barbara Lindsey  
Rajeev Bansal

### ***Diversity and Multiculturalism***

Robert Stephens, Co-Chair  
Xae Alicia Reyes, Co-Chair  
Mary Ellen Junda  
Jason Irizarry  
Yara Zoccarato (student rep)

### ***Quantitative***

Wally Madych, Co-Chair  
Alex Shvartsman, Co-Chair  
Jennifer Tufts  
Thomas Roby (away AY 11-12)  
James Cole  
David Gross

### ***Computer Technology***

Suresh Nair, Co-Chair  
Richard Jones, Co-Chair  
Kim Chambers  
Steven Park  
Andrew DePalma  
Katherina Sorrentino

### ***Writing***

Tom Deans, Co-Chair  
Tom Long, Co-Chair  
Douglas Kaufman  
Kathleen Tonry  
Janice Clark  
Mark Brand  
Michael Mei (student rep)

