



## *Academic Senate*

### **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

*Sang-Hee Lee, Chair*

November 8, 2023

**TO:** Ken Baerenklau, Associate Provost and Professor of Public Policy (Co-Chair)

Omar Safie, Director of Evaluation & Assessment (Co-Chair)

**RE: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR**

During their November 6, 2023 meeting, Executive Council had significant discussion regarding the [subject proposal document](#) and the requests of the UCR Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) to (1) adopt program learning outcomes for general education in their document and (2) to charge a standing committee of faculty with responsibility for managing this important but often overlooked part of our curriculum.

I write to provide the consultative feedback from Executive Council (below) and the tasked Senate committees (attached):

- Committees are in unison to recognize the critical importance of general education at UCR; their responses are mixed on the issue of the establishment of a new standing committee.
- Many committees have more questions for the proponents.
- Some Council members are wary of establishing another committee when there are committees already in place to do this potentially charged work.
- Some may be in support of ad hoc joint Senate-Administrative committees to address assessment, core competencies, and general education, with a reminder regarding the report from WSCUC. Others were in support of a standing committee.
- Deep concern was expressed about the critical need for UCR to address and finalize general education components.
- Members discussed assessment as a joint Senate-Administrative responsibility.
- Some members expressed support for a new proposal document from the Administration/AAC in response to this one.

Please also reference the attached memos from consulted Academic Senate Committees.

After the AAC's consideration and incorporation of feedback from this Senate review, Executive Council invites representative(s) of the AAC to a future Executive Council meeting for discussion. Please contact Academic Senate Executive Director to schedule time.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sang-Hee Lee".

Sang-Hee Lee

Cc: Executive Council  
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director  
Academic Senate Analysts



October 10, 2023

To: Senate

From: School of Business Executive Committee

Re: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR

In its October 10, 2023 meeting, the School of Business Executive Committee discussed the proposal and voted unanimously against it. The committee agrees that core competencies and learning outcomes need to be better assessed as required for accreditation. However, the committee questions whether creating a new Senate standing committee is truly necessary in this effort.



## *Academic Senate*

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

October 25, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Matt King, Chair  
Committee on Academic Freedom

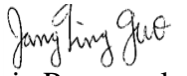
Re: **Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR**

The Committee on Academic Freedom reviewed the proposal to improve assessment of core competencies and general education at UCR and did not have any concerns related to Academic Freedom.

**COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL**

October 18, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jang-Ting Guo, Chair   
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR

In its 10/16/2023 meeting, CAP discussed the *Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR*. The committee commends the effort in improving General Education (GE) for our undergraduate students. In addition, the committee is supportive of the proposal that the Academic Senate formally adopts program learning outcomes for GE and charges a standing committee of faculty with the responsibility for managing the GE curriculum. Below are our additional comments and suggestions:

- Although the 2021 Senate ad hoc committee on GE generated the report *R'Horizons: Proposal for a New UCR General Education Curriculum*, there has not been a further action plan for implementing this committee's three recommended GE options or a combination of them. CAP believes that the program learning outcomes for GE will depend on what the new GE curriculum is.
- The proposal treats GE as an academic program. In this context, what will be the role of UCR's Division of Undergraduate Education?
- Learning outcomes for the WSCUC core competencies, one of the two motivations for the proposal, should be explicitly included in the charge of the proposed Academic Senate GE Committee.
- At UCR, along with the aspirational GE goals and the WSCUC core competencies, there are also university and college-level breadth requirements. CAP notes that these three have significant overlap. Will the proposed Academic Senate GE committee be responsible for aligning all these three if so desired?
- What would be the future role of the Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC)? AAC has already been providing oversight for the assessment of program learning outcomes (although not for GE yet) and core competencies. In addition, what is the Meta-Assessment Committee mentioned in the proposal (page 2) and its relationship with AAC?



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

October 26, 2022

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Ward Beyermann, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy

**Re: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR**

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed the proposal to improve assessment of core competencies and general education at UCR at their October 6, 2023 meeting. The majority of members present were opposed to the proposal and two members voted to support the proposal.

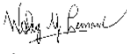
The Committee recommends that the proposal be updated to provide a stronger justification for the proposed Senate standing committee documenting the need for the committee and presenting a clearer understanding of the proposed committee's charge. Additionally, the Committee recommended the need for a more detailed mapping of learning outcomes perhaps performed by an ad hoc committee or Senate standing committee.

The committee was not enthusiastic about adopting program learning outcomes for general education because it was viewed as premature at this stage.



October 30, 2023

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Wesley Leonard, Chair   
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposal: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR

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The CHASS Faculty Executive Committee reviewed and discussed the “Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR” from the UCR Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) on October 25, 2023. While the Committee recognizes the importance of General Education and student achievement of core competencies, it is not ready to embrace the AAC's requests to consider:

- 1) Adopting program learning outcomes for general education, and
- 2) Charging a standing committee of faculty with responsibility for managing this important but often overlooked part of our curriculum

Responses to request #1:

Given that *R'Horizons: Proposal for a New UCR General Education Curriculum*, a recent product of a two-year endeavor and significant investment of faculty labor, could not gain much traction on campus, how does the AAC envision this task to be accomplished? Reinventing the wheel to produce another GE proposal that fails to garner support from faculty should be avoided.

One suggestion for the AAC is to ask the Office of Evaluation and Assessment first to create an inventory of the core competencies existing GE courses already cover. A matrix of GE courses and learning outcomes can help identify what our current strengths are and what is missing in our GE program. This approach may provide a more concrete starting point for Senate faculty to engage in a more limited task.

Response to request #2:

It is unclear what a GE standing committee would be charged with. Senate committees on Courses and Education Policy are already tasked with approving courses and programs. Although neither of these committees is charged with creating and managing the GE program, there may be some redundancies between the proposed committee and existing committees. Meanwhile, assessment should not be the task of a Senate committee since this task falls under the Office of Evaluation and Assessment.

The GE program cannot be managed like the interdisciplinary programs, which are equivalent to majors and therefore have specific learning outcomes based on the program's theme and are managed by faculty who teach courses for the major. Faculty who teach GE courses, while they are equipped to identify learning outcomes for their own programs, may not have expertise in assessing general education outcomes. Although a specialized committee may fill this gap, since GE courses are spread around many departments that depend on them for enrollment, an effort to consolidate the management of the GE program will likely face resistance from departments and colleges that may see this move as limiting academic freedom and the ability of faculty, departments, and colleges to decide on curriculum. We are also concerned about the lack of sufficient staffing to be able to address and implement any substantive changes to the GE program.

Overall comments:

The CHASS FEC regards the current request from the AAC to be hastily oriented toward meeting accreditation requirements. The Committee does not believe that appointing a Senate committee will lead to a successful campus-wide adoption of general education learning outcomes. CHASS FEC, however, is willing to continue to be engaged in deep conversation and wishes to be consulted in matters concerning the General Education Program.





October 5, 2023

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Bahram Mobasher, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

SUBJECT: Response to [Campus Review] Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR

Dear Sang-Hee,

CNAS Faculty Executive Committee has some comments we would like to bring to the attention of the Senate.

We believe that the management of this program, particularly the selection of classes, needs careful consideration. The classes chosen for general education must align closely with the intended learning outcomes. We also suggest more faculty inclusion in selecting surveyed classes to identify courses that can contribute meaningfully to the University's general education goals. The committee also believes it is important that the selection of courses is not department-centric, as the needs and objectives of departments vary. We are concerned that the proposed program lacks a mechanism for ongoing assessment and improvement, as it's essential that this initiative is not merely a mandate but is used to enhance our general education program continually. We have observed that the Assessment Advisory Committee does not currently include members from our college and recommend expanding representation to ensure a more comprehensive perspective. Lastly, we would appreciate an update on the status and outcomes of past general education revamp initiatives to avoid duplicating efforts.

In conclusion, we are not fundamentally opposed to the proposal outlined in the memo. However, we believe it requires more robust faculty input, transparency, and ongoing assessment to ensure its success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Mobasher" with a stylized flourish underneath.

Bahram Mobasher, Ph.D  
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



**COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES**

October 20, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Michalis Faloutsos, Chair  
Committee on Committees

Re: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core  
Competencies and General Education at UCR

The Committee on Committees reviewed the Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR at their October 12, 2023 meeting and was supportive of adding a standing Senate committee on General Education.



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON COURSES**

October 17, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: James Flegal, Chair  
Committee on Courses

**Re: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR**

The Committee on Courses reviewed the proposal to improve assessment of core competencies and general education at UCR at their October 11, 2023 meeting. The Committee recommends that the proposal be updated to include a charge for the proposed Senate standing committee to provide more detail and clarity on how the proposal will affect courses and instruction at UCR.

**FACULTY WELFARE**

November 1, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Committee on Faculty Welfare

**RE: [Campus Review] Proposal: *Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR***

The Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the *Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR*. We wish to express the following:

- On page 5 of the proposal, it states:

*...the AAC proposes that the Academic Senate formally adopt program learning outcomes for general education and charge a standing committee of faculty with responsibility for managing this important but often overlooked part of our curriculum.*

CFW's comments and concerns pertaining to the aforementioned are:

1. The external WSCUC assessment is now under two years away. In 2022, an external WSCUC team indicated that a draft proposal integrating the core competencies into a new general education structure was proposed to the UCR Academic Senate by the Academic Senate's General Education Review Committee; and progress on this draft proposal has stalled. Now, there appears to be an attempt to reallocate labor to a new standing committee of faculty.
  2. We agree that more attention could be paid to integrating core competencies into a new general education structure, as the assessment of our students is important and this has stalled out. But we worry that creating another Academic Senate committee to accomplish this task is just another way for administration to offload the work onto faculty.
- With respect to assessment of students, the work this entails, and the scope of what is being asked of the Academic Senate and/or faculty (i.e that faculty create another committee or do this additional labor), we refer to the following document, ["Instructions on Using CANVAS Outcomes for Core Competency Assessment."](#)

The FAQ section of this document notes:

*How does this impact the instructor/TA?* The only impact it has on the instructor/TA is the time they put into scoring their students. This does not impact instructors/TAs in any other way.

The previous response wrongly implies that this is minimal impact and misunderstands the time intensity of grading assignments. This is not minimal impact; the time it takes for many of us (and our TAs) to grade assignments is intensive. If the AAC and UCR wants to implement these changes across classes, then they need to appropriately allocate the resources to do so. Asking faculty to do more here (i.e. adding labor to their existing courses, or forming another committee where you offload additional assessment onto faculty) seems concerning to us.

CFW stresses that asking the faculty to do more is always problematic, especially in these days when the faculty are already overloaded with too many things to do. Faculty are still recovering from the effects of COVID on all aspects of our careers: research took a huge hit; teaching is more problematic than ever; and one wonders how we find the time to commit to professional service. To boot, now we have to take into account the whole “graduate student as employee” issue. Taking on additional assessment tasks just adds to the overload.



## *Academic Senate*

### **GRADUATE COUNCIL**

October 20, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: David Oglesby, Chair  
Graduate Council


Re: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR

Graduate Council reviewed the Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR at their October 19, 2023 meeting. The Council would like to be provided with a charge for the proposed new standing committee before providing a detailed response. The purview of a new standing committee is unclear -- what will this committee be responsible for to justify its creation? What power will this committee have?

**PLANNING AND BUDGET**

October 30, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Reza Abbaschian, Chair   
Committee on Planning and Budget

**RE: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR**

At our meeting on October 10, 2023, the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the *Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR*. CPB is generally supportive of the proposal but has the following questions:

- What are other UC campuses doing to improve assessment of core competencies/general education? And, what are other campuses' "breadth requirements"?



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION**

October 31, 2023

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Jianzhong Wu, Chair *Jianzhong Wu*  
Preparatory Education

Re: **Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR**

The Committee on Preparatory Education reviewed the proposal to improve assessment of core competencies and general education at UCR at their October 30, 2023, meeting and is supportive of the proposal.

It was noted in the report that “The Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) is established by the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor and provides oversight for the assessment of program learning outcomes, core competencies, and performance in non-academic units” with the footnote that “Upcoming changes to the WSCUC accreditation standards will still require development of core competencies in students but will not specify what they should be.” The Committee would like to know what this will mean if each campus/university can develop their own core competencies.





October 30th, 2023

**To:** Sang-Hee Lee, Division Chair of the UCR Division of the Academic Senate and Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of the UCR Academic Senate

**From:** Katherine Meltzoff, Ph.D., Faculty Chair of the School of Education Executive Committee

**Subject:** [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and General Education at UCR

The SOE Executive Committee reviewed the Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies. Comments/feedback were solicited at our executive committee meeting and via email.

We do not have any comments or feedback.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Katherine Meltzoff  
Faculty Executive Committee Chair  
School of Education  
University of California, Riverside

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
Riverside Division

FR: Richard M. Carpiano, Chair  
Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: [Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core  
Competencies and General Education at UCR

Date: November 6, 2023

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The Faculty Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy reviewed the document  
“[Campus Review] Proposal: Proposal to Improve Assessment of Core Competencies and  
General Education at UCR.”

We support this effort but wish to submit the following comment:

There should be more clarity of how this will be executed. Which faculty will be responsible for determining and assessing the General Education (GE) courses? In other words, will faculty within a department have to do both a major student learning outcome (SLO) assessment and a similar assessment for their GE courses? Or, will an externally appointed committee coordinate this assessment, do much of the assessment work, and only require internal faculty members to provide the requisite data for the evaluated GE courses?

Sincerely,



Richard M. Carpiano, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Professor of Public Policy