



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

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.