

Background for GEC Senate Resolution of 11/19/03

The Faculty Senate's General Education Committee (GEC) is responsible for implementing the General Education curriculum requirements for our undergraduate students. This includes setting hallmarks and verifying that courses submitted for General-Education designations meet the hallmarks. This process involves a large number of faculty members serving on the Foundation and Focus Boards, in addition to the GEC and Senate Executive Committee (SEC) from which final approval must be granted. We are now in our second year of the new General Education program's implementation.

The articulation process governs the manner in which students' transferred credits meet our General Education requirements. How courses, from other institutions or from within the UH System, are counted towards General Education is administered by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The GEC provides guidance to this office so that the standards that are required of entering freshmen are also imposed on transfer students. Since the number of students that transfer into University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) is quite large, this is a significant issue that cannot readily be handled in a case-by-case manner. As a result, there are several carefully crafted documents that have been approved by the Board of Regents (BOR), which govern this process. The main ones are BOR Policies Chapter 5 on "Academic Affairs," Executive Policy E5.209, and last year's 12/24 memo from interim VPAA Neubauer. In addition, our accreditation agency, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), has a handbook which details its standards for General Education requirements.

The GEC and the SEC are currently in discussions with the offices of the VPAA and the VCAA over revisions to current articulation policy. Several meetings have addressed the issues, and letters have been exchanged with copies to the President and the Chancellor. The desire to create a "seamless system" needs to be balanced against UHM's need to maintain its academic and program integrity. Many years of research, consultation, and planning went into the Manoa faculty's crafting of a General Education Program that is integrated with the educational goals of our many majors. The purpose of the resolution before the Senate is to ask the President to ensure that current policies, including the UHM governance policies enacted in support of the General Education Program's integrity, be honored in all efforts to adjust articulation procedures to changing realities.

11/14/03