UHM Faculty Senate General Education Committee (GEC)
Annual Report 2011-12
June 21, 2012

Membership: Joe Jarrett (Chair), Dore Minatodani (Vice Chair), Fred Birkett, Jim Caron, Sianha Gualano (ASUH), Scott Rowland, Galen Sasaki, Mamoru Sato, Comfort Sumida, Wei Zhang; with ex officio support from Dick Chadwick (SEC liaison), Todd Sammons (GEO), Lisa Fujikawa (GEO), Jo-Anne Nakamoto (GEO), Dawne Bost (GEO), Ron Cambra (OVCAA), Garett Inoue (A&R), and Ryan Yamaguchi (A&R).

1. Course Proposal Review

A. Summary. Each of the following General Education Boards met several times from October 2011 – April 2012, and the following total number of courses proposals were reviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Proposals reviewed</th>
<th>Recommended or approved</th>
<th>Pending, withdrawn, or denied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Focus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-Focus</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-Focus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-Focus</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversification</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
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In accordance with our specific GEC responsibilities, the full GEC reviewed applications for general education foundations, multiple focus, and course-based focus designations, and considered focus exemption requests.

B. Foundations course applications were referred to the Foundations Board for review and the F Board returned recommendations back to the GEC. Two new FG courses were recommended for approval (HAW100 and LING 105, both for FG-B), one new FS course was rejected for a full designation, but was supported for a continuing probationary designation (SOCS 150 for FS, see below), and several courses were recommended for renewal. One course was not recommended for renewal (ANTH 151 for FG-A) due to overemphasis on one specific global region and due to significant variation between multiple course syllabi. The GEC voted on and confirmed all F Board decisions, and decided to approve SOCS 150 for a 2 year probationary approval for the FS designation.

i. Probationary approval for SOCS 150: “Street Science: Evaluating and Applying Evidence in Daily Life.” One particularly challenging course review centered on the application for Foundations-Symbolic Reasoning (FS) designation for SOCS 150. This course was approved for a probationary one-year approval for the 2011-12 academic year. In Fall 2011, a resubmission was rejected by the F Board due to a lack of symbolic content throughout the course. Following joint meetings between the GEC Chair, the F Board, and the SOCS 150 course directors, a redeveloped course proposal was submitted and reviewed in Spring 2012. The course content had been adjusted to include a significant amount of symbolic reasoning in the form of deductive and inductive logic. However, the F Board felt that the level of the incorporation into most of the course lectures and readings was cursory, and that the homework and exams were not sufficiently rigorous with regards to symbolic reasoning. The course was unanimously rejected for not meeting the FS Hallmarks. However, the F Board voted for an additional one-year probationary approval. The GEC carefully considered the F Board’s
recommendations, but decided to grant a two-year probationary FS designation to allow the course directors an additional year to modify the course content and improve the next application. Resubmission is requested in Fall 2013.

C. *Multiple focus designations.* Applications for multi-focus designations (i.e., those requesting three or more focus designations) were reviewed first by the respective Focus Boards and then presented to the GEC for approval. In particular we attempted to determine whether a course could sufficiently integrate the varied foci (E, H, O, or W) while accomplishing the hallmarks of each individual focus. All four courses reviewed were discussed and approved.

D. *Course-based focus designations* were reviewed for seventeen courses. In this category, courses with multiple sections and instructors, which, by their content and delivery meet the focus hallmarks, were reviewed and discussed by the GEC. All seventeen courses were subsequently approved.

E. *Focus exemption applications.* The GEC received two applications for exemption from a W-focus requirement from two students that had taken a study-abroad course in Japan with a professor from the University of Illinois. Both requests were approved. In the course of the application process, the question was raised by one of the students as to whether several students in the same course could file a joint application through the GEO. Jarrett decided that the applications should be filed separately, but that any supporting documents such as course syllabi and the mentors letter could be filed once and the GEO staff would make copies for each application.

F. *Diversification designations.* A subcommittee of the GEC (Caron, Sumida, Rowland, Birkett) reviewed requests for a Diversification designation. The decision of the subcommittee stands unless there is significant disagreement among committee members. Of the 37 courses reviewed, 28 were approved for a diversification designation. No issues or disagreements were brought to the full GEC.

2. Manoa Faculty Senate Charges to the GEC
In addition to our GEC responsibilities, the SEC asked that we consider the following:

A. *Critical Thinking.* GEC (Sammons, Caron) took the lead to convene a working group (WG) with representatives from CAPP and MAC to consider the development and inclusion of critical thinking skills development in the curriculum. The WG has met 9 times and has examined and discussed the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) as a vehicle for determining whether critical thinking skills are being taught in selected courses on campus. Susan Hippensteele is taking the lead in coordinating this exam as part of the new course, SOCS 150, which is designed around instruction in critical thinking skills. The WG will monitor these efforts and will issue recommendations regarding the use of the CAT exam. The WG decided to adopt the definition of critical thinking skills as defined in the CAT exam. The WG also examined undergraduate program SLOs at UHM to determine whether critical thinking skills, as defined by the CAT development team, are already included in the description of some undergraduate degrees. An exhaustive catalog of existing program SLOs was assembled and reviewed, leading to the conclusion that many disciplines are already aware of the importance of critical thinking skills and have incorporated these concepts at the program level. Finally, the WG recommended that the Assessment Office become involved in developing ways to assess critical thinking in GenEd courses and in the various disciplines.
B. **Institutional Learning Objectives.** A working group headed by CAPP included two members from GEC (Minatodani, Rowland). The working group was charged with drafting Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) in response to a WASC requirement that became apparent during the recent UHM reaccreditation process. The WG discovered that a previous faculty committee convened by the OVCAA had drafted a document titled the Manoa Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (MUGLOs), based largely on the previously published Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) outcomes (see [http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm)). These became the starting point for the revised draft ILOs. The draft ILOs were then compared to UHM GenEd requirements and program SLOs for twenty representative departments; it was determined that a combination of the GenEd requirements and program SLOs aligned well with the major points of the draft ILOs. Finally, since the UHM strategic plan includes Hawaiian cultural knowledge, a section was added to the draft ILOs to support this institutional goal. One noted deficiency in the UHM curriculum relative to the ILOs is the lack of any uniform requirement for civic engagement or environmental stewardship. The draft ILOs were forwarded to the MFS for further comment and review.

C. **High DFWI Courses.** Last year, a working group consisting of members from GEC, CAPP, and MAC issued a summary report with suggestions for reducing the high failure rates in specific lower division GenEd courses. This year, a working group was convened led by GEC (Jarrett, Birkett) with additional members from CAPP and MAC, to reexamine this issue and to formulate specific recommendations for ways the campus administration could address the issue. The WG met several times in Spring 2012, and revisited a few of the most problematic departments (Math, Chemistry, Philosophy, Psychology). The WG determined that Departments have taken significant steps to address student success, particularly in lower division courses that affect large numbers of students. It is expected that those changes alone should have a significant impact on student success. The WG also formulated several recommendations that could be carried out at a campus-wide level. For example, one recommendation was to expand the availability and quality of Student Learning Centers (similar to the Student Success Center, the Learning Assistance Center, and the College of Natural Sciences Student Learning Emporium). In particular, these Centers are able to offer students a convenient place to work through homework with readily available TAs or undergraduate tutors to assist with difficult problems. Another recommendation was for the implementation of Faculty Academic Development Sabbaticals, in the form of a small number of competitive one-semester teaching buyouts for faculty who wish to devote their efforts to innovative course design or redesign. The High DFWI WG report was forwarded to the MFS for comment and approval.

3. **FS Compliance**

A review of banner data by GEO staff indicates that only ~60% of students complete the FS requirement by the end of the 1\textsuperscript{st} year (≥25 credits) and only ~75% by the end of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year (≥55 credits). There are currently ~1300 students with ≥25 credits that have not completed an FS course (includes recent transfers). The GEC discussed a proposal from the 2010-11 Foundations Board to enforce the FS requirement. A series of email messages were written that remind students of the requirement, with increasing level of sternness progressing from 1\textsuperscript{st} to 4\textsuperscript{th} semester. These email messages were sent to 2745 students in Fall 2011, and 457 students in Spring 2012. We will continue to monitor compliance to see if the reminders are a sufficient incentive to improve the compliance rate. We have also discussed a method for instituting registration holds to enforce compliance; these holds would be applied to students with ≥55.
UHM credits that have not completed or are not currently enrolled in an FS course. Tentatively, this may go into effect during the 2012-13 academic year. We recommend that subsequent GECs revisit the issue of FS compliance in order to determine whether email reminders are sufficient and whether registration holds are necessary.

In Spring 2011, a Working Group of Foundations Board and GEC members discussed the current FS Hallmarks, and in particular, whether these Hallmarks and current FS courses are in compliance with WASC accreditation standards. WASC requires that all undergraduate 4-year degrees should include core education in “quantitative skills”. It was concluded that the wording of the FS Hallmarks allows a subset of students to avoid quantitative skills by taking logic courses and avoiding math and statistics courses. The WG forwarded a resolution calling for a change in the explanatory notes to the FS Hallmarks, which would require that future FS courses include some instruction in quantitative skills.

The resolution was forwarded as a proposal for review by the Multi-Campus Foundations Board, which includes one member from each of the campuses that are party to the Multi-Campus Articulation Agreement (E5.209). After much discussion, a multi-campus working group was constituted to study the issue.

The final recommendation, approved by the Multi-Campus Foundations Board, was to modify the FS Hallmarks as follows:
1. Hallmark 5 would be changed to read: “include computational and/or quantitative skills.”
2. The first explanatory note under Hallmark 5 would be changed to read: “The course will not focus solely on computational skills, i.e., the application of algorithmic processes leading to determinant answers.”

This recommendation was approved by individual campus representatives, and many of the campuses will update their FS Hallmarks in Fall 2012. At the UHM campus, changes to the Hallmarks that do not make fundamental changes to the GenEd requirements still need to be approved by the GEC. The GEC unanimously approved these changes at the May 2012 meeting.

Alternative, more drastic changes have been discussed within the GEC. One solution discussed at length by the GEC involves splitting FS into two components, Quantitative Skills (FQ) and Logical and Critical Reasoning Skills (FR), with a requirement for 3 credits of each requirement by the end of the 2nd year. An overlapping course approval could be set up in which certain courses could be given simultaneous FQ and FR designation, while other courses such as Statistics or Business Accounting might be given only the FQ designation and non-quantitative courses such as Philosophy might be given only the FR designation. The Multi-Campus Foundations Group noted that other campuses should be involved in developing and approving the hallmarks for any new GenEd requirements, but that they would expect UHM to take the lead in initiating the process.

5. WASC Accreditation and General Education
At several meetings hosted by WASC representatives over the 2011-12 academic year, members of the GEC (Jarrett, Minatodani) and the GEO (Sammons, Fujikawa, Bost) were informed of upcoming changes in the reaccreditation process that will impact General Education at UHM. The current accreditation handbook (WASC Handbook of Accreditation) describes the following core competencies (criteria for review 2.2a):
• college-level written communication
• college-level oral communication
• college-level quantitative skills
• information literacy
• the habit of critical analysis of data and argument

WASC is in the process of redesigning the review process, and has issued a summary of the changes (Commission Resolution Nov 3 2011). A primary change was the requirement that institutions come up with methods for assessing the success in delivering the five core competencies, with an initial request that institutions pick three competencies and design specific quantitative methods for assessing quality and success. Institutions would then be expected to use this data to improve the design of the core courses or the general education curriculum.

These changes could impose a significant burden on the GEO to collect data regarding courses in the GenEd curriculum; for example, to assess student learning of “college-level written communication” through FW and W focus courses. There are currently approximately 100 sections of FW courses and more than 1100 sections of W focus courses in the Fall and Spring semesters combined, and this presents a challenge to simply assemble the data. This assumes, of course, that we can reach a reasonable consensus on what type of data should be collected and how that data will be used.

Currently, WASC has come under significant criticism and resistance from several large California universities. They are further studying the issue, and are requesting additional comment from institutions and other stakeholders. A final decision on accreditation redesign will be issued in November 2012 (redesign February 2012 update).

WASC is also studying a completely different method for assessing educational success through a scheme referred to as the “Degree Qualifications Profile” or DQP. The DQP was developed by 4 national leaders in educational assessment, including AAUP president Carol Geary Schneider. The DQP follows a similar list of outcomes as described in the LEAP report and retained in our own proposed ILOs (see discussion above). The DQP concept differs dramatically from the current scheme in three major ways:
1. Institutions would define the essential learning outcomes for each program in five broad categories:
   1) Intellectual Skills (our current Foundations and Focus)
   2) Broad Integrative Knowledge (our current Diversification)
   3) Specialized Knowledge (major)
   4) Applied Learning (major)
   5) Civic Learning (we currently don’t do this in GenEd or in most majors)
2. Each program would define the different expectation for knowledge, skill set, and abilities for Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Degrees.
3. The outcomes are defined as a series of competency statements that can be directly assessed by the program. For example, “Constructs sustained, coherent argument or presentation on technical issues…” for oral competency.

The University of Hawai‘i system has been volunteered by the system-wide administration to be a test site for this new approach to learning outcomes and assessment. We would be expected to develop a plan to work within the DQP system in parallel to the existing WASC system.

However, in informational meetings with faculty from several UH campuses, it was clear that there is a lot of resistance to the DQP plan as it is currently written. In particular, many faculty
found the language of the competency statements to be too prescriptive, as if a student should be able to check off a list of skills and competencies to be awarded a bachelor’s degree, and that programs and courses should also be designed around the same list of skills and competencies. WASC representatives seemed to back away from the idea of immediate implementation, and are now conducting workshops to try to understand whether this “framework” is useful as a mode for educational assessment. I expect that this issue will continue to circulate and some form of this will eventually find its way into the WASC accreditation language.

6. Future Issues

A. Symbolic Reasoning and the FS requirement. Many faculty members would agree that, for the majority of our students, math skills are dismal when they enter UHM and do not get significantly better after 4-6 years of college education. There are undoubtedly a number of potential causes, including lax admission standards for entering freshmen, community college transfer students who don’t meet minimum admission standards, avoidance of the FS requirement until sophomore, or sometimes even junior year, and the fact that some FS courses do not teach quantitative mathematical skills. I will recommend to the incoming SEC that this issue be studied by an MFS working group next year with the goal of providing specific recommendations for changes in admissions policy and/or changes in the core GenEd requirements. The overriding goal should be providing students with the knowledge and skills they will need to be productive in a highly technological world.

B. It has come to the attention of the GEC that W focus courses do not have a minimum amount that the W material must count towards the final grade. In a few recent proposals, course syllabi seemed to indicate that the W material was worth <5% of the final grade. This is allowed as long as the syllabus includes a statement indicating that all W assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course. In a few recent proposals, course syllabi seemed to indicate that the W material was worth less than 5% of the total grade. Many members of the GEC viewed this as conflicting with the original intent of the focus requirements. The GEC should consider establishing a minimum for the extent to which the W material counts towards the final grade. If the focus application handouts suggest that the W material should be at least 40% of the final grade for a 3 credit course, then a minimum of 20% would seem very reasonable. There should be no exemption simply for adding a statement to the syllabus.

Joseph Jarrett
GEC Chair, July 2011-June 2012