GG,

Let me note at the outset that Literary and Artistic Studies Subcommittee approved of these courses for the very reason that they included "or consent of the instructor" on their prerequisite listing. I was on the subcommittee. The consent of the instructor option allows faculty to accept students from other disciplines after considering their individual status in terms of standing and preparedness. In fact, well over one-third of the students in Gay and Lesbian Studies come from disciplines other than English, and they are admitted based on a consideration of their major and their status.

The notion that these prerequisites are "hidden" seems unfounded at best; they are written into the catalog.

That the committee of the whole decided to ignore the recommendation of the subcommittee without an appreciation and understanding of the subcommittee’s work also seems deeply troubling.

More importantly than the procedural issues is the substantive attempt to make the only course at the university which introduces students to the discipline to gay and lesbian studies unable to qualify as foundational for purposes of general education. How many students—gay and straight—will pass over this foundational course because it is not designated Gen Ed? How many might be willing to enroll in it and learn something about this discipline if it retains its Gen Ed status? These are crucial questions that ASCRC needs to ask about what a liberal arts education means. Should we facilitate interdisciplinary and diversity study at UM or discourage it?

If the university wants to limit all Gen Ed courses to 100 and 200 level courses it needs to do that, but that has never been my understanding of the new guidelines.

I also note that the January 20 appeals deadline is unreasonable. Our professors are off contract at the end of this week. They cannot and should not be required to meet a deadline that occurs at a time when the full university is not even in session.

Sincerely,

Casey Charles
Chair, English