# General Education Committee Annual Report 2021-2022

## Membership Faculty

Coreen Duffy, Music - Chair(2023)  
Paul Muench, Philosophy (2022)  
Ione Crummy, MCLL (2022)  
Lauren Fern, MC – Applied Arts & Science (2023)  
Anna Sala, DBS (2022)  
Lara Berich, Theatre & Dance (2024)  
Jen Thomsen, Forestry (2024)  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_- Social Science  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_- Professional Schools  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_- College of Humanities & Science  
  
Students  
Tor Gundmudsson

### Additional Representatives (Ex-Officio)

Nathan Lindsay, Vice Provost  
Brian French, Executive Director, Office of Student Success

## Responsibilities outlined in the Faculty Senate Bylaws

The primary responsibility of the General Education Committee is ongoing evaluation and assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the general education requirements and criteria. The General Education Committee acts as an advocate for general education, proposes revisions to its requirements and criteria, reviews proposals, and ensures that all general education requirements are feasible within campus constraints, Board of Regents policies and legislative actions.

## Meetings

The Committee met by-weekly via Zoom.

## General Education Course Review

In the fall the Committee reviewed and approved 10 new general education courses. Most of these are in provisional status until the assessment report is received.

## Rolling Review

The General Education Committee also conducted the rolling review of Ethics (E), Language (100-level sequence), and Language Exemptions. Assessment reports submitted for Historical Studies (H), Democracy and Citizenship (Y) and Cultural and International Diversity (X) Literary & Artistic Studies, Historical Studies, Mathematics, and Natural Science (N) were also reviewed along with forms for courses given extensions from past rolling reviews. The submitted forms were divided into three groups of 2-3 members for review. Several general education forms were not submitted by the deadline so a second deadline of on October 25th was provided and department chairs were notified. Twenty-five additional forms were submitted by the second deadline, but Many language exemption forms were still missing. The committee approved the [rolling review deadline](https://umt.box.com/s/jcpwehfobnuxwki5ns3xp5kosuqmy49b) and suggested custom deadlines be sent to each college with a response required from the chair to identify the faculty member responsible for submitting the form.

DBS was granted a continued extension to submit natural science forms as well as language exemption forms until the spring curriculum deadline of February 11th. An additional 23 forms were received. Camie also reached out to individual faculty whose courses were not submitted. The [tracking spreadsheet](https://umt.box.com/s/64gcwp7i5bt670uep28t4mj3nfa7n9c2) provides status information for the courses. A total of 117 forms were reviewed. The multiple submission dates were problematic for tracking and the Committee. Most forms were submitted in Coursedog, with some assessment reports in the old Word forms.   
  
Similar to the last rolling review, many courses did not supply adequate evidence of assessment and several required assessment plan clarifications and some were missing general education learning outcomes on course syllabi. The subcommittee chairs sent several follow-up communications specifying the need for revision. Extensions were granted given the challenges associated with teaching during a pandemic. A few courses are no longer offered and departments chose to remove designations on others.

The Committee discussed concerns that the assessment review via the form may not be meaningful or have the effect of improving general education instruction. The next accreditation visit will be 2024. Vice Provost Lindsay will be asked to describe the process, provide samples and highlight strong programs. The university needs to work on a culture of learning and responsibility to students rather than busywork required for compliance.   
  
Vice Provost Lindsay provided a brief assessment training on September 22nd using the [Assessment Workshop PowerPoint](https://www.umt.edu/faculty-senate/committees/gened/General%20Education%20Assessment%2012-2-19.pptx). Assessment is an internal analysis of whether the course is having the intended learning result and should provide insight into possible improvements. The learning outcomes should be measurable. Most assessment is done using a rubric, scoring evaluation, or specific questions on an exam or quiz. These should provide insights on students’ strengths and weaknesses. Findings can be qualitative, but should be based on evidence and provide a clear roadmap to make changes. An assessment process is required by accreditors, but should not be viewed as punitive.   
  
Professor Muench, who has served as a subcommittee chair explained his tracking spreadsheet and rubric. Faculty need to think about the course design, teaching, and reflect on student learning. The assessment can be a tool to better serve students.

* 1. SYL lack­s Gen Ed requirements
  2. No SYL attached
  3. Criteria not sufficient
  4. Lacks student learning goals
  5. Learning Outcome Assessments
  6. Needs Assessment targets/too broad
  7. No assessment
  8. other

## Form Revision

The Committee approved revised language and formatting for the Word general education form template and Coursedog. The form lists the learning outcome content and measure side by side in a table, as well as the assessment findings and action plans / use of data. Procedure [202.20 General Education Criteria](https://www.umt.edu/faculty-senate/procedures/general-education-procedures-202/general-education-criteria-202.pdf) and Learning Outcomes was also edited- Learning Goals were updated to Learning Outcomes.

Review Issues

* Assistant Registrar Troy Morgan joined the General Education Committee on October 13th to clarify the language requirement. Technically, students only have to take the second course of the sequence – 102 or a language course 201 or above. The 200-level language courses were added to the general education section of the catalog academic year 2015-2016. The committee decided that only the 100-level sequence should be included in the rolling review.
* DBS considered eliminating the general education designations of BIOB 160/161 and BIOB 170/171. The courses are more rigorous than BIOB 101 and are required for Biology and Wildlife Biology majors as well as forestry majors. Biology wanted the courses to fulfill the general education requirement for majors but not be listed as general education courses because often non-majors fail the course. Chair Duffy attended a meeting with stakeholders concerned with Biology’s intention to remove the general education designation for BIOB 160/161. The recommended solution was for Biology to request the natural science designation for the BIOE 370/371 course sequence which has several prerequisites. Associate Registrar Troy Morgan recommended Biology consider offering a late start general education natural science sequence with a lab to capture the students who are doing poorly. The established mechanisms to manage student preparedness for difficult courses are prerequisites and placement exams. The Office of Student Success would help navigate the logistics if Biology decided to create a placement exam. There is still concern with why a major that is mostly science is required to take a course that fulfils the natural science general education designation. There are likely other gateway courses for science majors. Ultimately the department submitted forms to renew the designations
* While reviewing courses being proposed for the Ethics and Human Values gen. ed. requirement (both new courses and those up for renewal under rolling review), the committee found that faculty are not always clear about the difference between addressing ethically significant events and teaching ethical frameworks/principles for students to use in their thinking about those events. Instructors need to highlight the ethical theory they address in their courses, and identify the readings that introduce students to the ethical frameworks/principles that students are exposed to. The committee is considering how this situation might be improved. It will consider revising the criteria/learning outcomes and may potentially call on a faculty with expertise to clarify the learning outcomes from the perspective of what students should learn from these courses. Faculty need more guidance to ensure a more successful renewal process.

Status of Rolling review courses

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2019-2020** | **Full approval** | **Provisional** | **Extension** |
| Historical Studies | 25 | 26 |  |
| Democracy & Citizenship | 15 | 10 |  |
| Cultural & International Diversity | 17 | 31 | 2 |
| **2020-2021** (CD) |  |  |  |
| Literary & Artistic Studies | 11 | 44 | 7 |
| Natural Science | 13 | 23 | 7 |
| Math | 14 |  | 3 |
| **2021-2022** (CD) |  |  |  |
| Language | 4 | 7 |  |
| Language Exemption | 38 |  | 2 |
| Ethics | 16 | 11 | 4 |
| **2022-2023** |  |  |  |
| Expressive Arts (61) |  |  |  |
| Social Science (39) |  |  |  |

* The Committee briefly discussed ideas to improve the rolling review process. It would like to have a meeting with department chairs to clarify their responsibility for ensuring the department’s general education courses are assessed to meet accreditation standards. Camie will draft guidelines and or topics for discussion that address the expectations for courses taught by adjunct faculty. Faculty who are assigned to teach general education courses need to be aware of the assessment requirement and provided with support. The culture around general education instruction needs to improve. Faculty teaching in the various groups could create a community of practice and discuss their assessment strategies. Perhaps a video can be created. Camie will be working with Claudine in the Provost’s Office on items to include in the orientation for new chairs.
* The Committee will consider revised criteria for the natural science category next academic year. It may also consider whether a general education requirement could be waived if included in the major.

## Communication Items:

* Review of [Accreditation](https://nwccu.app.box.com/s/nimzpotmpq9f6ezg95refbkwlco9ofzy) Assessment language

The Committee briefly discussed the accreditation assessment requirement. Vice Provost Nathan Lindsay noted that initially there is a lot of mentoring and counseling to help faculty understand the requirement and appropriately address the assessment questions and data requirements. It was suggested that institutional or overarching general education learning outcomes be created, which could be done through the General Education revitalization process. Another suggestion was to use a confidence interval which would likely provide higher quality and mentoring for faculty involved. The Committee wants to ensure a quality program and courses. However, it has been difficult to find members to serve and it is necessary to be realistic about what the committee can accomplish. The Committee will need to partner with the Provost’s Office to provide workshops and mentoring.

* Mansour, Mansfield Center Director and Professor Rob Saldin, Director of Mansfield Ethics and Public Affairs met with the committee on October 13th to discuss the proposed [Civic Knowledge Initiative](https://umt.box.com/s/baohtharod9jimrcbzkmoj1etzmhyvo6). Students would be required to listen to pod casts, watch videos and attend events with a civics designation. There was some confusion regarding how the initiative would be managed without being associated with a course and several follow-up meetings took place with various stakeholders. The initiative is on pause until the GEAHC is further along in proposing revisions to the General Education Program.
* Jeanie Castillo, UM Online and Writing Committee member joined the meeting on April 14th to provide a brief overview of the Writing Course Moodle Shell. Faculty can self-enroll in the course. It provides tips and tools for creating a quality online course, as well as an extensive information literacy section. A tutorial video will be added on how to complete the assessment form. Something similar could be created for general education. Camie will meet with Jeanie over the summer.

General Education Ad Hoc Committee

* [Revised Charge](https://umt.box.com/s/052v0qokzs27xj5xgrvmdleykstgpjzb) / [Guiding Principles](https://umt.box.com/s/gk3dw5i8sz0clglv4bdk3gqrmy5hxm7w)   
    
  Co-Chairs Metcalf and Tama-Sweet provided several updates to the committee. The current draft model has UM Experience courses (core courses) that all students take. The number of courses, content and titles will need to be determined. The current placeholders are Democracy & Citizenship, Data Reasoning & Skepticism, and Science in Society. The Science in Society course could potentially include a climate change topic as well as other important issues. Then students will have the option to complete general education courses (existing categories) within a pathway (GLI themes). Students could potentially earn a certificate by taking 4 courses in a pathway. This addresses the criticism that general education is disconnected. There should also be a course that introduces students to the Global themes with potentially could satisfy the Cultural & International requirement.   
    
  The draft model was presented to Missoula College and the Colleges of the Arts and Media as well as Humanities and Sciences for feedback. The GEAHC is regrouping given the feedback and the expected arrival of the new Provost and Dean of Humanities and Science. It is expected that there will not be a vote by the Faculty Senate until the end of spring 2023. Then it will take another year to work out the implementation details. Implementation will not be until fall 2024 at the earliest.