GEC Final Report
AY 2017-2018

Members of the Committee:

Amanda Bao, Charles Border, Leah Bradley, Linda M Bryant, Elizabeth Hane, Andrew Herbert, Myrtle Jones, Vincent Landers, Matthew Marshall, William Middleton, Helen Timberlake, Sarah Thompson, Kristen Waterstram-Rich, Michael Yacci

Regular Committee Work:

The Committee scheduled regular weekly meetings, but only met when there was actual business to conduct. In all, the committee met 19 times during the 2017-2018 academic year, plus several subcommittee meetings on its charges and other more specialized matters.

The committee approved GE status or Perspective designation to 35 courses, and approved changes to four immersions.

Very few courses were rejected for GE status or Perspective designation. One immersion from SOIS has been held up since it is a single, nine credit course and policy will need to be changed to accommodate it. It has been temporarily approved by the provost. A possible charge for the committee next year could be to review and revise the policy on immersions so that such a course could constitute an immersion.

Charges:

The Committee started the year with two charges:

General Education Committee Charges for 2017-18

GEC 1   Audit General Education courses campus wide, to assess whether i) Perspective courses include assignments/activities by which faculty can assess respective student learning outcomes, ii) whether General Education courses include assignments/activities by which faculty can assess student learning outcomes in Communication, and Critical Thinking, and iii) whether general education courses have registration restrictions.

GEC 2   Determine whether it would be beneficial to have a protocol for awarding a variance to courses that are ill-suited to assessment of the student learning outcomes listed in the Essential Elements category (such

courses might include large-enrollment courses in chemistry and biology), and if so, design and adopt such a protocol

In the fall the committee picked up a third charge, revising the GE Framework to accommodate a proposed Bachelor of Architecture degree. The GEC recommended the following changes to the GE Framework to the senate to accommodate the new degree and any others that might come along in the future (and they were passed by the Senate 16 November):

General Education Framework	BS	BFA	AAS	AS	All Other Baccalaureate Degrees
First-Year Writing	3	3	3	3	3
Perspectives	24	15	15	15	15
Immersion	9	9	0	0	9
General Education Electives*	24	3	6	12	3
Minimum Total	60	30	24**	30	30

Charge 2: After considerable discussion on the subject, the committee came up with the following protocol for waiving assessment of one of the two Essential Elements of the GE SLOs. This was presented to the Academic Senate in April.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT EXEMPTION PROTOCOL

Step 1: Departments Request Exemption
Departments can request in writing an exemption from one category of the Essential Elements (Communication OR Critical Thinking.) The request should outline the rationale for an exemption. The exemption applies only to the Essential Element Student Learning Outcomes and not to Perspective Student Learning Outcomes.

Step 2: Exemption Approval
GEC will review and approve, if applicable, an Essential Element Exemption in conjunction with the normal general education course approval process.

The following criteria will not be considered as a factor in the exemption of a general education course from the Essential Elements:
- Course or section size
- Anything related to individual faculty (workload, teaching or assessment methods)
- Mode of instruction

Charge 3: We are still in the process of completing our third charge, and it will not be finally completed until the Fall. We have decided to start with a pilot study using only one department (CLA-Sociology and Anthropology) to work out any kinks in the process.

GEC Charge, The GE SLO Course "Audit" Pilot

Step 1: Data Collection

GEC works with the registrar to get a list of all GE courses offered by SOCI/ANTH department
GEC works with registrar to determine the best method for obtaining this information for all RIT departments offering GE courses
GEC works with the registrar to obtain date which further defines the scope of the problem:
- The number/percentage of courses which are not aligned to the current framework (not mapped to at least one of each Essential Elements outcomes)
- The number/percentage of GE courses which are aligned to more than 5 GE SLOs
- The number/percentage of GE courses which are aligned to GE SLOs which have been removed from the framework

Timeline- April 2018

Step 2: Pilot with SOCI/ANTH Department

GEC meets with SOCI/ANTH to determine the following:
- Overall Course List: Does SOCI/ANTH agree with the list of GE courses? Are there courses which are not being offered?
- Essential Elements Mapping: Focus will be placed on review of Essential Elements outcome mappings. At this time the department can elect to make changes to the Essential Elements mappings, determining which outcomes fit best with the course curriculum and remove alignments that do not make sense. If courses exist without essential element mapping, mapping will be completed.
- Mapping to outcomes which no longer exist in the framework will be removed

*The SOC/ANTH department will have resources available as they complete this work including a list of current course mapping to GE SLOs , GE SLO Rubrics, the ability to consult with GEC, and the Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment.

GEC works with registrar to make requested changes to SOCI/ANTH GE SLO courses

Timeline- May 2018

Step 3: Develop Process and Implementation Plan

After the pilot, GEC will prepare instructions/guidelines so each department can go through the process. GEC will develop a project timeline and make recommendations for the best way to complete the work based on an estimate of how long it will take departments to do this work, what other information or resources might be needed, and what the consequences of changes will entail for departments and the university.

Timeline- Fall 2018

Possible Charges for AY 2018-2019:

Given that the General Education Committee's principal work is the review of new or revised courses seeking General Education status, Perspective designation and new or revised immersions, and that the workload can be quite heavy at times, the committee is reluctant to take on too much additional work. However, there are at least two charges that we can suggest.

The first would be the completion of the General Education audit. This is already underway and has been pending for the past two years. If the committee can keep to it's proposed schedule, the audit should be complete by the end of fall semester 2018.

The second charge could be a review of policy regarding immersions, to determine if policy should be changed to support the inclusion on non-three-credit courses, such as the nine credit, SOIS course/immersion.

Appendix I: Revision of the GE Framework to accommodate a proposed Bachelor of Architecture degree

D01.4 General Education Framework

I. Overview

The General Education Framework includes aspects that provide breadth and depth of study, and because communication and critical thinking skills are essential to the education of every student at RIT, opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement in these domains will pervade the General Education curriculum.

Breadth in the General Education curriculum is achieved through seven Perspective categories that promote different ways of knowing about the world. Courses in these categories will introduce students to fundamentals of liberal arts and sciences (methods, concepts, and theories) while emphasizing general education student learning outcomes. Students achieve deeper learning in a focus area by completing an Immersion, a set of three related general education courses in a theme or discipline.

II. Policy Statement on Requirements

In accordance with RIT Policies and Procedures Section D1, courses considered for general education standing will be evaluated using the criteria set forth by the RIT General Education Student Learning Outcomes and the NYSED Office of College and University Evaluation Policy Statement on Liberal Arts and Sciences. In particular, all general education courses will provide learning experiences designed to achieve at least one student learning outcome in both Communication and Critical Thinking, as described in the General Education Framework.

Each type of degree award requires a different number of general education credits as mandated by NYSED. When providing guidance, NYSED uses the term "liberal arts and sciences" to refer to general education. In accordance with NYSED's guidelines students must complete, at a minimum, the number of credits indicated in each category, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. The table below shows the minimum number of semester credit hours (sch) required in each category. Details regarding the general education framework can be found on RIT's General Education website.

General Education Framework	BS	BFA	AAS	AS	All Other Baccalaureate Degrees

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* Elective course credits plus other category credits must equal the minimum required
** NYSED requires 20; RIT framework exceeds the minimum requirement

Appendix II: Waiver for assessment of the General Education Essential Outcomes

<u>BACKGROUND</u>

Communication and Critical Thinking are essential to the general education experience of every student at RIT, and every general education course provides learning experiences with both of these skills. As such, all general education courses are aligned to at least one Communication and one Critical Thinking Student Learning Outcome, thereby ensuring that these elements (known as the *Essential Elements of General Education*) are embedded throughout the general education curriculum. However, some general education courses may be ill-suited to the assessment of the Essential Elements.

<u>RESPONSE</u>

GEC has made the following determinations:

1) GEC recognizes that certain courses may not have sufficient time to assess both Essential Elements of General Education, but do provide a significant general education experience for our students. Therefore, an "Essential Element Exemption" may be granted in the case that a course meets the traditional definition of general education ([see NYSED guidelines](#)) but constraints related to curricular opportunity make assessment of one of the Essential Elements problematic.

2) The following criteria will not be considered as a factor in the exemption of a general education course from the Essential Elements:

- Course or section size
- Anything related to individual faculty (workload, teaching or assessment methods)
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<u>ESSENTIAL ELEMENT EXEMPTION PROTOCOL</u>

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Appendix III: General Education Audit

GEC Charge, The GE SLO Course "Audit" Pilot

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Timeline- April 2018
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resources might be needed, and what the consequences of changes will entail for departments and the university.
Timeline- Fall 2018

Foreseeable Challenges, Roadblocks, Resistance:
- When/how/or will departments need to modify course outlines?
- Registrars data- how to update
- Time- this could take departments a long time!
- Communication- how do we share this with departments?