

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
of the  
**RULES COMMITTEE**  
concerning  
**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN  
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON  
GENERAL EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION (GEICO)**

**Presented at the  
Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Special Report of the Dean of Undergraduate Education on Modifications to General Education Requirements (dated June 29, 2009) describes some significant changes in the General Education requirements. These changes entail that many current 3-credit courses will need to shift to 4 credits.

This motion creates an Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Implementation (GEICO) with responsibility for soliciting and reviewing proposals to change the number of credits awarded for a General Education Course. This Committee will also decide minor questions of implementation as they arise, and it will make recommendations to the appropriate authority (Provost, Dean of Undergraduate Education, General Education Council, Academic Matters Council, Rules Committee) with respect to unforeseen issues which may arise which cannot be described as minor questions of implementation.

## **2. Charge**

a) To solicit and review proposals to change the number of credits awarded for an approved General Education Course from 3 credits to 4 credits. When approved by the Committee, such proposals will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate and the Provost for subsequent approval and signature as “minor course changes.” This process will constitute the only process necessary to increase the number of credits of an approved General Education Course from 3 credits to 4 credits; it supersedes the process for increase in credits for General Education courses described in Sen. Doc. 05-007.

b) To decide minor questions of implementation as they arise.

c) To make recommendations to the appropriate authority (Provost, Dean of Undergraduate Education, General Education Council, Academic Matters Council, Rules Committee) with respect to unforeseen issues which may arise which cannot be described as minor questions of implementation.

## **3. Change in Number of Credits: Past Practice**

Prior to Fall, 2004, changes in the number of credits of any course were regarded as a “minor change” that could be approved with a brief memo signed by the department head or chair, the dean of the school or college, the Secretary of the Faculty Senate, and the Provost or designee, as described in the Course Approval Procedure Guide.

Sen. Doc. No. 05-007 established a more elaborate procedure for reviewing proposals for changes in the number of credits in a General Education course: the proposal must be approved by both the Academic Matters Council and the General Education Council, and it must explain in detail why this change is needed and what it will involve.

The stated rationale for this new procedure was:

Increasing the number of credits assigned to a course implies that the course should have a higher weight within the total number of credits needed for graduation. This carries specific importance for courses fulfilling the General Education requirements, which specify a certain number of courses, not credits. If all General Education courses were to be increased to 4 credits, the weight of the General Education requirements

increases from the current 30% of the total curriculum to 40%. Such change greatly increases the probability that students in certain disciplines such as engineering and several others would not be able to graduate in 4 years.

In other words, because the General Education requirements are expressed in terms of *courses*, not *credits*, increases in the credits (and workload) of General Education courses produce an increase in the share of the total undergraduate curriculum devoted to General Education. The intention of Sen. Doc. No. 05-007 was to discourage such changes.

#### **4. Change in Number of Credits: Effect of New Requirements**

With the prospective adoption of the new General Education curriculum based almost entirely on 4-credit courses, the rationale in Sen. Doc. No. 05-007 is no longer relevant. The new curriculum still has course-based requirements, but it has fewer, more intensive courses that yield the same number of total credits. 4-credit General Education courses are a necessity rather than a problem in the new curriculum.

During the transition period, a large number of General Education courses will need to change from 3 to 4 credits. The procedure in Sen. doc. no. 05-007, which was intended to discourage changes, needs to be streamlined. Streamlining does not mean rubber-stamping, however. Applications to increase from 3 to 4 credits must be reviewed to ensure that they explain how the workload of the course will increase to match the increase in credits awarded.

Although the General Education Council could in principle undertake this review, in practice that is not possible, since the Council's responsibility to review existing courses and approve new ones already fully occupies its time and energy.

#### **5. Role of the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Implementation**

During a transition period, the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Implementation (GEICO) will have responsibility for soliciting and reviewing applications to increase General Education courses from 3 to 4 credits, including:

- (i) Immediately creating an application form for instructors requesting an increase from 3 to 4 credits in a General Education course. The form will include questions about what additional activities will be required of students, how this work will be evaluated, and approximately how much time it adds to a student's workload (bearing in mind that an additional credit brings with it an expectation of a 3 hour per week increase, on average, in time spent on the course). The form will have space for signatures of the department head or chair, the dean of the school or college, the chair of the Committee (GEICO), the Secretary of the Senate, and the Provost.
- (ii) Promptly reviewing these applications and, if satisfactory, recommending approval under the "minor change" procedure, which requires only the signature of the Secretary of the Faculty Senate and the Provost.
- (iii) In case of non-approval, providing helpful feedback with the expectation of reapplication.

During the transition period, the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Implementation (GEICO) will also have responsibility for deciding minor questions related to the implementation of the new policy, as they arise. If the Committee deems a question not to be

minor, it will refer the matter to the Rules Committee for presentation to the General Education Council or the full Senate, as appropriate.

Applications for approval of new 3- or 4- credit General Education courses will remain the responsibility of the General Education Council.

## **6. Membership of the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Implementation**

This Committee will have 10 members, appointed as follows:

The Chair of the General Education Council or designee.

Another voting member of the General Education Council, selected by the Chair.

The Chair of the Academic Matters Council or designee.

Another voting member of the Academic Matters Council, selected by the Chair.

The Secretary of the Faculty Senate or designee.

The Chair of the Rules Committee or designee.

The Registrar or designee (ex officio, non-voting).

The Dean of Undergraduate Education or designee (ex officio, non-voting).

The Associate Provost for Planning and Assessment or designee (ex officio, non-voting).

The Director of Assessment (ex officio, non-voting).

The Committee will elect a Chair from among its membership.

## **7. Final Report**

The Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Implementation (GEICO) will present its final report and cease to exist no later than August 31, 2012, or earlier if so decided by the Rules Committee, at which point its responsibilities will shift to the General Education Council.

**MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on General Education Implementation (GEICO), as presented in Sen. Doc. No.**