General Education Subcommittee Meeting Agenda
Thursday, December 18, 2014
9:30-11:00am
KL 324

I. Announcements

A. Welcome and brief remarks
B. GE external team, participant summaries on (p. 2) - Chair Zanzucchi
C. Rose Scott, GE participation in spring - Professor Scott
D. Communication to PROC (pp. 3-7) - Senate Analyst Paul
E. GE senior survey data preparation - Dr. Martin
F. Team conference call - Dr. Martin

II. Discussion

A. Undergraduate Chair pilot (pp 8-18): GE considerations-VP/DUE Whitt & Dr. Martin
B. GE self-study (pp. 19-47)
   - Undergraduate Council feedback summary (forthcoming)
   - Core 1 course evaluation data
   - General comments and priorities
   - Reminder: Self study will be sent to PROC on Friday, Jan 2 for distribution to the review team by Jan 9. Comments for development and revision may be provided until 5pm, Monday 12/22.
C. Site visit schedule (pp. 48-50)

III. Closing

A. Conference call time in January, TBD
B. Availability for GE committee meetings in spring 2015
   Consider F14 approach for S15 of 9:30-11am Thursdays, with second and fourth of the month. Please confirm to Fatima Paul by 12/22 if this logic generally works, with exact dates being: 1/22, 2/12, 2/26, 3/12, 3/26 (canceled w/spring break), 4/9, 4/23, and 5/14

GE External Team
Summary of background (from team proposal)

Barbara Sawrey, Chair
Areas of Expertise: Chemical education; Instructional technology; Accreditation
Credentials: Chemistry Professor; Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs/Dean of Undergraduate Education
Background: Dr. Sawrey has a combined faculty and administrative roles at UC San Diego, with specialization that is relevant to general education. She has a particular commitment to our campus as part of the original Senate Task Force for our campus. With her background in Chemical Education, she has researched critical thinking and problem solving in STEM undergraduate contexts. Further, her administrative experience is extensive, with particular focus on undergraduate education and accreditation. Dr. Sawrey would have insight into institutional planning related to GE assessment as well as a STEM emphasis within GE programming.

Jillian Kinzie
Areas of Expertise: Higher education; Student affairs; National survey data
Credentials: Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research & NSSE Institute
Background: Dr. Kinzie is Associate Director of the Center for Postsecondary Research & NSSE Institute at Indiana University. While faculty at IU, she coordinated the master's program in higher education and student affairs from 2000-2002. She has more than a decade of additional experience as a research associate and administrative work in academic and student affairs. With GE programming being institutional in focus, including intersections between academic and student affairs, Dr. Kinzie can provide insight into student success at broad and integrated level.

Terry Rhodes
Areas of Expertise: Quality of undergraduate education and access; General education; Assessment of student learning
Credentials: Vice President for the Office of Quality, Curriculum and Assessment at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
Background: Dr. Rhodes is a national GE figure, as Vice President of Curriculum and Assessment at AAC&U. He focuses on the quality of undergraduate education, access, general education, and assessment of student learning. He is also director of the annual AAC&U General Education Institute. Ongoing work on the LEAP initiative (Liberal Education and America's Promise) also informs our work on high impact practices and GE outcomes. Dr. Rhodes could provide significant insight and a national context for our local work on GE programming.

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12 December 2014

Dear Provost Peterson and Professor Ricci,

On behalf of the General Education (GE) Subcommittee, I am writing to provide a brief summary of timeline for the upcoming GE external team visit, with a draft letter for your consideration to share with the external review team. Our goal is to help inform the review process with some desired focus points, based on what we have learned from writing the self study.

Timeline: The review team is scheduled to visit the week of 9 February 2015, with arrival in Merced on 8 February 2015. The GE self study and site visit schedule will be available before 9 January 2015 for distribution by PROC. A standard set of program review questions (p. 11-12 from the Program Review Policy) would normally be enclosed, for team consideration. To account for the uniqueness of the GE review, please find attached a slightly modified version of these questions (e.g. deleting how our program serves GE).

Included with these materials would be a cover letter from the PROC co-chairs, providing the team with a campus welcome and review guidelines. If it would inform this process, enclosed is a draft welcome letter for consideration. To potentially supplement the standard guiding questions, the letter includes a brief reflection on the self study followed by suggested guidelines for desired input on GE.

Requested Review and Action: In anticipation of the transmittal of the self-study on 9 January 2015, and site visit schedule, we send this attached letter and standard questions for your consideration, feedback and approval.

We request, then, that PROC review and advise on these draft materials to confirm a final copy for transmission on 9 January 2015.

Thank you for your guidance on this process.

Sincerely,

Anne Zanzucchi

Anne Zanzucchi
General Education, Subcommittee Chair

Dear External Review Team:

Thank you very much for your commitment to serve as review team members for the General Education Program at UC Merced. We appreciate your willingness to assist the campus in its system of continuous improvement.

The purpose of this letter is to provide information about your upcoming visit, which will take place February 8-11, 2015. Please find enclosed the General Education Program's self-study and the related appendices. Also included is the site team visit schedule.

This is the first comprehensive review of our General Education program, the design of which was established before the university opened in 2005. The review comes at an important time in our institutional history. UC Merced is engaged in strategic academic focusing, which will establish the intellectual priorities of our institution. We are also planning to expand from our current enrollment of 6,250 students (about 5% are graduate students) to 10,000 students (90% undergraduate and 10% graduate) by 2020. The outcomes of this review, then, are essential to the development of a cohesive, coherent, assessable, and sustainable General Education program that reflects our goals for student learning in light of our emerging institutional priorities.

Please find attached a standard set of UCM academic program review questions to guide your review. Given the uniqueness of General Education and the timing of this review in our institutional history, we also ask that you address the following as you review the self-study and meet with campus constituents.

Overall, we are interested in the evaluation of UCM's GE program as a means for cultivating intended learning outcomes and supporting student success, including in light of national trends for effective design and assessment of GE. We are also interested your insights regarding the strengths and weaknesses of our existing program and related opportunities for development, particularly in relation to the campus' plans for growth.

As a means to support future development of GE, we also seek guidance in the following areas:

- Strategies for designing a program that will be broadly inclusive of faculty and staff, representative of the institutional scope of GE
- Structures for allocating appropriate resources and incentives to engage Senate faculty in the oversight and delivery of GE
- Processes for systematic and sustainable assessment of GE

These emphases, as well as the standard questions, are meant to orient this process and offer ways for the team to focus attention. In sum, please feel encouraged to work with the standard program review questions as well as these GE emphases as is most productive for your team. We welcome your insights and guidance on ways to re-design our GE program, particularly in light of past ambitions and future directions.

Appendix IV - Review Team Guidelines
UC Merced is interested in your overall assessment of the teaching and research accomplishments and potential of the unit you are reviewing. We are interested in the evaluation of the educational program and assessment practices, as well as comparisons to peer programs. Recommendations to increase resources may follow from your review, but are not in themselves the primary responsibility of the reviewers.

It might be helpful to think of your review with the following questions in mind:

1. Is the undergraduate program coherent in the areas of teaching, counseling, mentoring, and introduction to research for its students? Is it adequate in scope and depth to ensure education is appropriate for the B.A./B.S.? How well does the program align with and demonstrably support UC Merced's mission and goals?

2. Are the program goals clear and explicit in regards to what students should be learning in the program, and what skills and knowledge they should be taking away from each course? Is the program meeting its goals?

3. What is the overall quality of the program with respect to the following?

a. Faculty teaching
b. Student learning
c. Student satisfaction
4. Evaluate the program's assessment of undergraduate students' learning outcomes. Is the assessment plan appropriate? Effectively administered? Is it used to improve teaching and learning? Has the program had adequate support in developing and responding to its assessments?

The team may also wish to comment on its appraisal of student learning in the program, based on both examples of student work and the program's assessments.

5. Are students provided frequent opportunities to assess their skills and knowledge, and provided feedback to help them reflect on what they have learned and what they still need to learn?

6. How well does this program prepare graduates for careers it says it supports? Would students from the program be viable candidates for graduate programs? Professional programs?

7. Is the faculty quality and breadth of coverage adequate for a strong undergraduate program?

a. Areas that should (must) be strengthened or added?
b. Areas that should (must) be de-emphasized or removed?
c. In which area(s) should the next appointment (resources permitting) be made? *Revised October 31, 2011*

8. In many fields, long-range planning and strategic choices about areas of teaching and research are necessary. Does the program provide an imaginative, workable long-range plan that will allow it to make major contributions to the discipline and to pursue appropriate specializations with distinction? If not, what do you suggest?

9. What would be needed for this program (or some component) to achieve national distinction giving due consideration to present UCM faculty resources compared to those available at top ranked programs elsewhere?

10. How do students and faculty feel about class size in relation to program learning objectives? How do they feel about the proportion of classes taught by TA's and non-senate lecturers as opposed to regular faculty? How do students feel about grading standards and the responses they get to written work for their classes?

11. Do the current administrative structures at UCM foster undergraduate education in the program you are reviewing? Are there closely related units, including co-curricular units, at UCM or other UC campuses with which more collaboration should be undertaken? Are there appropriate support facilities such as libraries, teaching and research space, computer labs and training?

12. Is there sufficient interaction between the program and any campus programs with which it should interact?

13. Do students find it reasonable to complete the program of study on a four-year schedule?

14. Is the program doing enough to recruit high quality students?

15. Are there any questions we have not asked that you feel should be addressed?

We are aware that each program under review presents a special set of circumstances and that your review will need to take these distinctions into account. We intend these guidelines to be suggested topics that you may want to pursue rather than prescriptions of the process. As an External Reviewer, you should feel entirely free to pursue what avenues of investigation will yield constructive and relevant insights into the particular programs. We hope to obtain well thought-out and forthright judgments of where we stand in the academic picture, so that UCM may best capitalize on its strengths and take effective steps to correct weaknesses. The Academic Senate will give serious consideration to whatever directions you believe to be most worthwhile in achieving those ends.

Any questions concerning the review should be directed to the PROC Co-Chairs with a c/c to the Senate Analyst.

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15 December 2014

Dear Provost Peterson and Professor Ricci,

On behalf of the GE Subcommittee, we would like to thank PROC for coordinating the General Education review team, visiting from February 8-11 2015. The following memo is a brief update and request, related to the internal faculty lead serving as UC Merced's GE liaison.

In mid-November we nominated Jack Vevea as the GE faculty liaison, with the principle reasons being that he currently chairs Undergraduate Council and has institutional knowledge of General Education from previous administrative appointments. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Professor Vevea will not be available during the team visit.

The GE Subcommittee has discussed replacement options during our 4 December 2014 meeting. We unanimously agreed that Christopher Viney would be an ideal candidate, as Vice Chair of Undergraduate Council. He also has a depth of faculty and administrative experience with GE, from other institutional contexts and at UC Merced.

This is a time sensitive matter, as external committee members would like more information about review team leadership and the site visit scheduling. We would request, then, that this GE liaison topic be reviewed and acted upon at the December 18 PROC meeting. Thank you for your guidance and feedback with the GE program review process.

Sincerely,

Anne Zanzucchi, General Education Subcommittee Chair

Proposal for Pilot Program – Undergraduate Chairs in Undergraduate Majors in the School of Natural Sciences and the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts*
December 8, 2014

Purpose:
The position, Undergraduate Program Chair, will facilitate attention to undergraduate success within the context of the major and in support of program and institutional goals. In carrying out this role, undergraduate chairs will represent the major program to the Undergraduate Student Success Subcommittee of the Enrollment Management Committee. In addition, the Undergraduate Chairs will work closely with AP/By-Law Unit Chairs and Grad Group Chairs in attending to curriculum and other matters (see Appendix 1 for specific responsibilities). The Undergraduate Chairs also will work closely with the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education on matters related to institutional priorities for undergraduate student success.

Rationale:
Creating the administrative role of Undergraduate Program Chair, will:

1. Organize responsibilities for, and attention to, undergraduate student success. These responsibilities include program learning outcomes assessment, curriculum and resource planning, student petitions, General Education, and other duties as specified in the Undergraduate Chair position description.
2. Provide reliable access to, and interactions with, a group of faculty members for the VPDUE, thereby allowing for effective institution-level attention to matters related to undergraduate student success.
    a. In this way, the undergraduate chairs will function with the VPDUE much as the Graduate Group chairs do with the Graduate Dean, linking program-level practices and priorities to those at the institutional level.
    b. Institutional priorities include addressing external demands for institution-level attention to undergraduate success (e.g., WASC, UCOP), as well as internal concerns (e.g., revising General Education and GE program assessment, improving student retention and persistence, identifying and addressing obstacles to student success).
3. Address inequities in rewards, compensation, and incentives across schools and programs for a variety of tasks related to undergraduate student success, including the role of Faculty Assessment Organizer.

Pilot Project Specifications

1. Duration: The proposed pilot project will begin January 1, 2015 and end on January 1, 2017.
2. Evaluation of Pilot: Criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot will include (1) assessment, including timely completion of annual assessment reports and use of assessment data for program improvement; (2) curriculum, including annual and three-year teaching and course scheduling plans consistent with student needs for normal progress to degree; (3) engagement of faculty in institution-level student success initiatives, including identifying and addressing obstacles (e.g., academic policies, practices) to student success, examining potential programs for honors students, using data to assess program effectiveness; (4) advancing goals for General Education; and (5) considerations internal to programs, including communication and coordination.
    - If, at the end of the pilot period, evaluation data demonstrate that the program is unnecessary, it will not continue.
    - If, at the end of the pilot period, evaluation data demonstrate that the program is effective and should be continued, a proposal for a permanent program will be introduced to Undergraduate Council for Senate consultation.
    - Because the nature of future academic organizational structures at UC Merced is undetermined at this point in time, the pilot program for undergraduate chairs does not presume any particular future structure. Decisions about those structures (e.g., whether traditional academic departments are desirable) could affect the need for, or roles of, undergraduate chairs.

3. Scope of Responsibilities and Compensation:
    - One Undergraduate Chair will be named for each of 21 undergraduate majors.

- Two options for undergraduate chair responsibilities are available and compensation differs based on the scope of responsibilities (see Appendix 1 for descriptions; these were based on appointment letters for Grad Group chairs and for the School of Engineering Undergraduate Chairs). AP/By-Law Unit chairs, in collaboration with program faculty, will decide which option meets the needs of the program most effectively.

1) *Option 1*: The Undergraduate Chair will perform the role of Faculty Assessment Organizer (FAO), as well as the role of undergraduate chair. In this case, the Undergraduate Chair will receive compensation in the amount of $5000 to a research account (for use as a stipend or research funds) for each year she or he serves as Undergraduate Chair.
2) *Option 2*: The roles of Undergraduate Chair and FAO will be performed by two different program faculty members. In this option, the Undergraduate Chair will work with the FAO to ensure integrated, regular, and ongoing attention to undergraduate learning and success in the program. In Option 2, the Undergraduate Chair and the FAO will receive compensation in the amount of $2500 each to a research account (for use as a stipend or research funds) for each year each serves in these roles.

4. Funding: Half of the amount ($2500 per Chair) will be paid from the FAO stipend budget of the Coordinator for Institutional Assessment; those funds were first allocated in AY 2013-2014[1]. The other half will be funded, as are the Graduate Chairs, by an allocation from the Provost's Office.

5. Coordination: The Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education (Office of Undergraduate Education) and the Coordinator for Institutional Assessment will provide oversight and coordination of the pilot program. They will seek input from undergraduate chairs, AP/By-Law Unit chairs, and FAOs to evaluate the pilot.

*The School of Engineering faculty approved Undergraduate Chairs in Spring 2014

[1] The FAO stipend budget also includes funds for the FAOs of standalone minors. As such, these FAOs will receive a stipend as well.

Appendix 1: Meetings with Senate Faculty, Fall 2014

Background
In August 2014, the school deans and the Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor approved a proposal for a pilot program for Undergraduate Chairs. The School of Engineering faculty had approved undergraduate chairs for Engineering's five undergraduate majors in Spring 2014 and the pilot program was a means to create similar opportunities in the School of Natural Sciences and the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts.

Timeline
Beginning in September 2014, the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education and the Coordinator for Institutional Assessment met with Senate faculty members to obtain feedback about the proposed pilot program. All FAOs for majors in SNS and SSHA received an invitation to meet. This included FAOs who also fill the administrative role of AP/Bylaw chairs. At the request of some FAOs, faculty leads for their majors were invited as well. The VPDUE also had initial meetings regarding the pilot program and the process for moving forward with the pilot with Jack Vevea, Chair of Undergraduate Council, and Gregg Camfield, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. Those meetings were followed by the following faculty conversations:

School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts FAOs – September 23, 2014
Participants: Virginia Adan-Lifante (Spanish), Kathleen Hull (Anthropology), Sholeh Quinn (History), Susanna Ramirez (Public Health), Michael Spivey (Cognitive Sciences), Jack Vevea (Psychology), Alex Whalley (Economics), Laura Martin (Coordinator for Institutional Assessment), and Elizabeth Whitt (Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education).

School of Natural Sciences FAOs and Undergraduate "Leads" – October 1, 2104
Participants: Francois Blanchette (Applied Math), Yue Lei (Applied Math), Carrie Menke (Physics), Jay Sharping (Physics), Jess Vickery (Chemistry), and Elizabeth Whitt

School of Natural Sciences AP Chairs who also serve as FAOs - October 3, 2104
Participants: Rob Innes (Management), Nathan Monroe (Political Science), Nella Van Dyke (Sociology), Laura Martin, and Elizabeth Whitt.

Feedback provided at these meetings (see notes that follow) highlighted the fact that majors differ in their current models for focusing on undergraduate education, and thus "One size does not fit all." Following this feedback, the pilot was revised to offer two options/models: (1) Option 1, whereby the Undergraduate Chair also is FAO, and (2) Option 2, whereby the FAO and UG chair duties – and the $5000 stipend – are split between 2 faculty members. In Option 2, however, the Undergraduate Chair would be the point of contact and coordinator, in collaboration with the AP/By-Law Unit chair, for all relevant aspects of the undergraduate program in the major.

Following those revisions, the proposal for the pilot program was shared, and discussed, with AP and By-Law Unit chairs in SNS and SSHA:

AP and By-Law Unit Chair Meetings

November 18, 2014
Participants: Marilyn Fogel (SNS), Arnold Kim (SNS), Ignacio Lopez-Calvo (SSHA), Jennifer Manilay (SNS), Nella Van Dyke (SSHA), Jan Wallander (SSHA), Laura Martin, and Elizabeth Whitt.

November 24, 2014
Participants: Michael Colvin (SNS), Laura Martin, and Elizabeth Whitt

November 26, 2014
Participants: David Noelle (SSHA), Laura Martin, and Elizabeth Whitt

Notes from Meetings with Senate Faculty
The meetings with faculty (FAOs, undergraduate leads, and AP/Bylaw Chairs, including AP Chairs who are also FAOs) generated a lot of very useful information regarding the proposed role of undergraduate chairs. What follows is a brief summary of that information, organized by perceived strengths of the role and the concerns and questions that were raised. Faculty of both schools identified similar strengths and raised similar concerns.

Perceived Strengths:
The general consensus across the faculty meetings was that undergraduate chairs are a positive step, providing recognition and reward for tasks many faculty members are doing without such reward or recognition. Examples of specific comments regarding perceived strengths include:

One faculty member commented, "This position makes perfect sense to me. It's a structure that allows for planning and coordination." Another noted, "Linking broader responsibility for student success with the FAO role creates logical connections." Similarly, "this provides opportunities for focused conversations about undergraduate students, similar to those we're having about graduate education." Also, "this position will raise the priority of undergraduate education" within the majors.

A common response across the discussions was "This formalizes, rewards, and recognizes what we're already doing." At the same time, "we'd have one point person who can coordinate with other faculty in [the school] and across campus." "This puts undergraduate priorities administratively on peoples' radar; we can set goals and work toward something meaningful, rather than functioning 'willy nilly'." "It fills something that's been missing."

Concerns and Questions:
Along with the positive comments, faculty members raised some key concerns and questions about the roles of undergraduate chairs. The most common concern can be summarized as: "The 'devil is in the details.' One faculty member noted, "It's a good idea, but what about the practicalities?" The practicalities raised most frequently as concerns were (1) possible disruption to "what's working now," (2) challenges of organizational communication, and (3) faculty workload issues. The latter included concerns about one individual assuming responsibilities that are currently distributed. Ways in which these concerns have been addressed so far are summarized below; it should be noted, however, that <u>all</u> of these matters – and others – will be the focus of ongoing evaluation of the pilot program.

One theme in the meetings with faculty was, in the words of one person, "One size does not fit all. We have a good arrangement, where I take care of the major and [my colleague] is FAO." As noted earlier, the response to this concern was to create two options for organizing the work of the undergraduate chair and the FAO, with the UG Chair acting as point of contact to support communication and coordination.

Another common concern was expressed by one faculty member as "the potential for splitting our attention." That is, might there be potential for undergraduate education initiatives to become disconnected from other program priorities or other program leaders (e.g., AP/By-Law Unit chairs, Grad Group chairs)? The descriptions of the undergraduate chair position include a strong emphasis on collaboration and communication within the program unit, as well as between the program unit – via the undergraduate chair and the AP/By-Law Unit chair -- and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. This is not to say there aren't challenges inherent in this arrangement, but effective communication among colleagues is key to anticipating those challenges.

A related concern was whether the roles identified for the undergraduate chairs overlapped with the responsibilities of the AP/By-Law Unit chairs. This turns out not to be true in most cases, though the AP/By-Law Unit chair responsibilities vary somewhat across programs. A chart detailing areas of difference and overlap (based AP/By-Law Unit chairs responsibilities as outlined in the SNS and SSHA appointment letter) is attached.

Finally, as one faculty member noted, "this is a lot of work for one person." Concerns were raised about the extent to which the responsibilities of the undergraduate chairs would be too much – particularly without a course release (which is not an option in the pilot program) – for untenured faculty members or, in some cases, associate

professors. This is a significant concern, of course, and one that will be taken into account in the evaluation of the pilot. However, many Senate faculty currently perform these roles and do so without the recognition that would come with a specified administrative position and without a stipend for the work.

Appendix 2: Appointment Letters

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DATE
Professor XXX
Undergraduate Program Chair, School of [Name]

With this letter I am pleased to offer you an appointment to the position of Undergraduate Program Chair for [Program Name] in the School of [Name]. This is a two-year appointment, beginning xx and ending xx.

As Undergraduate Program Chair, your primary duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Facilitate program attention to undergraduate success (enrollment management, persistence, timely degree progress and graduation, diversity) in the context of the major and in support of institutional goals. Includes service as the program representative to the Undergraduate Student Success Subcommittee of the Enrollment Management Council.
- Serve as program Faculty Assessment Organizer (FAO), with responsibility for annual and periodic program assessment. Administer the curriculum and resources associated with a degree program or programs, in consultation with by-law/unit chair, program faculty and staff; may delegate tasks to program faculty or committees.
- Represent program faculty in all matters related to the undergraduate degree program(s) to the dean(s) and School Executive Committee(s).
- Review and correct catalog copy and other publicity for the undergraduate program.
- Review and act on student petitions for exceptions to policy, such as requirement or prerequisite waivers, course substitutions from other programs or institutions, leaves of absence, and so on.
- In collaboration with by-law/unit chair, graduate chair, and program faculty, assist with teaching assignments consistent with the program's 3-year teaching plan to ensure that degrees are attainable in 4 years, faculty teaching capacity is being used efficiently (e.g., required courses offered at least once per year, attention to under-enrolled courses), and General Education commitments are met.
- Serve as program representative to the School Curriculum Committee(s).
- Participate with the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education and the Coordinator for Institutional Assessment in ongoing formative and summative evaluation of the Program Chair pilot program.

This position is intended to ensure regular and ongoing attention to undergraduate learning and success in your program in keeping with school and campus priorities. Consistent with this purpose, you will receive compensation in the amount of $5000 (in the form of a stipend or research funds) each year you serve in this role.

Thank you for assuming this appointment on behalf of your colleagues and the University. Please signify your acceptance of these responsibilities by signing below.

Sincerely,

[Name], Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

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DATE
Professor XXX
Undergraduate Program Chair, School of [Name]

With this letter I am pleased to offer you an appointment to the position of Undergraduate Program Chair for [Program Name] in the School of [Name]. This is a two-year appointment, beginning xx and ending xx.

As Undergraduate Program Chair, your primary duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Facilitate program attention to undergraduate success (enrollment management, persistence, timely degree progress and graduation, diversity) in the context of the major and in support of institutional goals. Includes service as the program representative to the Undergraduate Student Success Subcommittee of the Enrollment Management Council.
- Administer the curriculum and resources associated with a degree program or programs, in consultation with the Faculty Assessment Organizer (FAO), the by-law/unit chair, program faculty and staff; you may delegate tasks to program faculty or committees.
- In collaboration with by-law/unit chair, graduate chair, and program faculty, assist with teaching assignments consistent with the program's 3-year teaching plan to ensure that (1) degrees are attainable in 4 years, (2) faculty teaching capacity is being used efficiently (e.g., required courses offered at least once per year, attention to under-enrolled courses), and (3) General Education commitments are met.
- Represent program faculty in all matters related to the undergraduate degree program(s) to the dean(s) and School Executive Committee(s).
- Review and correct catalog copy and other publicity for the undergraduate program.
- Review and act on student petitions for exceptions to policy, such as requirement or prerequisite waivers, course substitutions from other programs or institutions, leaves of absence, and so on.
- Serve as program representative to the School Curriculum Committee(s).
- Serve as general point of contact for all matters related to the undergraduate academic program. This includes working with the FAO to coordinate student learning outcomes assessment and use of assessment data for program improvement.
- Participate with the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education and the Coordinator for Institutional Assessment in ongoing formative and summative evaluation of the Program Chair pilot program.

As part of your program's administrative leadership team, you will work with your program's Faculty Assessment Organizer to ensure (1) integration of your program's assessment work with broader program stewardship activities, and (2) regular and ongoing attention to undergraduate learning and success in your program in keeping with school and campus priorities. As the Undergraduate Program Chair you will be the point of contact for the responsibilities outlined above and program assessment.

Consistent with this purpose, you will receive compensation in the amount of $2500 (in the form of a stipend or research funds) each year you serve in this role.

Thank you for assuming this appointment on behalf of your colleagues and the University. Please signify your acceptance of these responsibilities by signing below.

Sincerely,

[Name], Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

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DATE
Professor XXX
Faculty Assessment Organizer, Program [Name]

With this letter I am pleased to offer you an appointment to the position of Faculty Assessment Organizer for [Program Name] in the School of [Name]. This is a [x-year] appointment, beginning xx and ending xx.

In collaboration with the Undergraduate Chair, program colleagues and with the support of the [Manager of Student and Program Assessment X], FAOs facilitate the annual assessment activities of their programs. This includes

- assessing at least one Program Learning Outcome annually[1].
- discussing findings with program faculty, including the identification of any actions suggested by the findings.
- implementing resulting actions, including any that address the assessment strategy itself.
- developing a summary report that is shared with the school dean and the Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC). The annual report submission date for your program is [insert date].
- reviewing, disseminating (to colleagues), and implementing PROC feedback as appropriate.

FAOs also facilitate academic program review, a comprehensive, peer-review based review that each program undertakes once every seven years. Your program's next review is currently scheduled for [x – and hyperlink].

As part of your program's administrative leadership team, you will work with the Undergraduate Chair to ensure (1) integration of your program's assessment work with broader program stewardship activities, and (2) regular and ongoing attention to undergraduate learning and success in your program in keeping with school and campus priorities. The Undergraduate Program Chair will be the point of contact for program assessment, consistent with his/her larger chair responsibilities.

Consistent with this purpose, you will receive compensation in the amount of $2500 (in the form of a stipend or research funds) each year you serve in this role.

Additional information and resources in support of your work as FAO are available via the FAO FAQ page at assessment.ucmerced.edu.

Your program's previous Program Learning Outcomes Reports as well as PROC feedback on these activities are available [point to where this is archived]. In this same folder, you will also find your program's assessment plan for addressing the WASC Core Competencies as part of your program's ongoing assessment efforts.

Following the advice of experienced FAOs[2], I encourage you to contact [Manager's name] as soon as possible to review your program's timeline for completing the annual assessment cycle, and to initiate your program's efforts.

Thank you for assuming this appointment on behalf of your colleagues and the University. Please signify your acceptance of these responsibilities by signing below.

Sincerely,

[Name], Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

Signed _____

[1] Typically this involves coordinating with program faculty to identify, gather and assess evidence of student learning (e.g. student work and student perceptions of their learning) and the student experience. This may involve developing and/or revising program rubrics.
[2] Data from FAO interviews conducted during 2013-14.

Appendix 3: Comparison of AP Chair and Proposed UG Chair Responsibilities 8.12.2014

AP Chair Responsibilities	Shared Responsibilities	Proposed UG Chair Responsibilities
• Be responsible for all academic personnel actions within a unit; may delegate actions to unit faculty or committees • Represent the unit faculty in all personnel matters to the School Dean and School Executive Committee • Ensure that all faculty and LSOE personnel actions (promotions, merit reviews, faculty-requested actions) are carried out in a timely fashion (e.g., assemble committees, solicit external letters, write and present cases, and write transmittal letters), either by the chair or by delegation to an appropriate faculty member • Oversee committees, hiring plans, and recruitment for new faculty searches, and be accountable that appropriate attention is given to issues of faculty diversity • **Propose unit resource needs**, in consultation with group faculty, to the School Dean • **In collaboration with graduate group and undergraduate program chairs, recommend teaching assignments for faculty in the unit** • Recommend sabbatical leaves and other leaves of absence for unit members in consultation with graduate group and undergraduate program chairs • **Review and recommend temporary lecturer appointments in collaboration with undergraduate program chair** • Oversee assignment of mentors to lecturers as appropriate • Nominate faculty for awards; write letters of support for faculty applying for grants when the Unit Chair is the appropriate person to provide such a letter • Meet annually with each faculty member to discuss performance in research, teaching, and service • Develop and maintain a unit diversity program for faculty • Maintain a climate that is hospitable to creativity, diversity, and innovation • Serve as the main point of contact for the unit	• Resources • Review and recommend temporary lecturer appointments. • Teaching assignments	• As FAO, **administer the curriculum and resources** associated with a degree program or programs, in consultation with program faculty and staff; may delegate tasks to program faculty or committees. This includes annual and periodic program assessment. • Represent program faculty in all matters related to the undergraduate degree program(s) to the dean(s) & School Executive Committee(s). • Review and correct catalog copy and other publicity for undergraduate program. • Review and act on student petitions for exceptions to policy, such as requirement or prerequisite waivers, course substitutions from other programs or institutions, leaves of absence, and so on. • **In collaboration with AP and graduate group chairs, make teaching assignments** consistent with, and maintain, the program's 3-year teaching plan to ensure that degrees are attainable in 4 years, faculty teaching capacity is being used efficiently (e.g., required courses offered at least once per year, attention to under-enrolled courses), and General Education commitments are met. • Serve as program representative to the School Curriculum Committee(s). • Facilitate program attention to undergraduate success (enrollment management, persistence, timely degree progress and graduation, diversity) in the context of the major and in support of institutional goals. • Serve as the program representative to Undergraduate Student Success Subcommittee of the Enrollment Management Council. Collaborative responsibilities • Engage in academic and strategic planning, budget requests, and requests for faculty and staff FTE. • Coordinate undergraduate awards. • Participate in and recruit other volunteers for School/UCM UG program activities (e.g., Preview Day, Bobcat Day) • **Review and recommend temporary lecturer appointments in collaboration with AP Chair** • Determine course needs/qualifications for teaching assistants, oversee TA training, and communicate the needs and any special circumstances to the graduate group chairs and the designees of the school deans.

Appendix 4: Graduate Group Chair Appointment Letter

U N I V E R S I T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO

SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE GRADUATE DEAN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
Mailing Address:
5200 North Lake Rd.
MERCED, CALIFORNIA 95343

DATE

Dear,

With this letter I am happy to appoint you to the position of Graduate Group Chair for the (NAME) Graduate Group. This is a calendar-year appointment effective (DATE). This one-year appointment is renewable on an annual basis, subject to administrative review by Dean Aldenderfer and the graduate dean, in consultation with (GROUP NAME) faculty members. As liaison between your graduate group and the Graduate Division, your responsibilities include the following:

- Oversee the progress of graduate students through the program, including satisfaction of degree requirements and advancement to candidacy, in coordination with group advisors, faculty and staff
- Represent the group faculty in all matters related to the degree program(s) to the lead dean, the graduate dean, Graduate and Research Council, and School Executive Committee(s)
- Determine resource needs and administer program budget, in consultation with group faculty, lead dean, and graduate dean
- Oversee graduate student recruitment, graduate program website, admissions, and financial aid, in consultation with group faculty, lead dean, and graduate dean
- Determine graduate course offerings each semester, including curriculum changes, in consultation with group faculty, and school staff and faculty involved in course scheduling and teaching assignments
- Determine graduate course resource needs for equipment, staff support, and other resources, in consultation with faculty and lead deans
- Serve as graduate group Faculty Accreditation Organizer by overseeing annual program assessments and periodic program review, to monitor and maintain academic excellence
- Consult with deans in selecting and reviewing graduate support staff
- Coordinate participation of the graduate group in School and University program activities, including graduate student fellowship and award programs
- Develop and maintain a plan for promoting diversity among matriculated graduate students
- Manage and respond to program feedback and inquiries from faculty, students, staff, and reviewers

If you agree to accept these responsibilities, you will receive compensation in the form of ($5000) per year, which can be used either for research expenses or summer stipend. I thank you for considering this appointment on behalf of your colleagues and the Graduate Division. Please signify your acceptance of these responsibilities by signing below, and returning a signed copy to the Graduate Division.

_____

(Professor Name)

Sincerely,
Professor Chris Kello
Acting Dean of the Graduate Division

General Education Program Review
Self Study

Authored by the AY 2014-2015 GE subcommittee whose members include Anne Zanzucchi (GE Subcommittee Chair), Charles Nies (Interim Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs), Elizabeth Whitt (Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education), Harish Bhat (Faculty, Applied Mathematics), Jane Lawrence (Special Assistant to the Chancellor), Katie Brokaw (Faculty, English Literature), Kelvin Lwin (Faculty, Computer Science and Engineering), Laura Martin (Coordinator of Institutional Assessment), Rose Scott (Faculty, Psychology), and Wil Van Breugel (Core 1 Co-Coordinator and Physics Faculty).

Special thanks to Fatima Paul (Assistant Director of Senate Office), Jack Vevea (Undergraduate Council Chair), and Undergraduate Council's Senate faculty for supporting the development of this self-study process and report.

GE Self-Study Report, General Overview

The overall goal of this report is to describe the present state of General Education (GE) at UC Merced (UCM). In broad terms, the report traces a trajectory of past, present, and future, with greatest attention to the present state of GE as a basis for obtaining feedback. Academic program review at UC Merced involves a set of guiding questions, which are section titles and topics to organize self-study reports generally and this one specifically. Therefore, this report begins with a general overview of the history and context of GE at UCM. In the sections that follow, we address the general academic program review questions: "What are you doing?, "Who is doing it?," , "How are you doing it?," and "How well are you doing it?" The report concludes with a description of potential future directions and questions regarding those directions we hope the review team will address.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction, Program Mission and History

Section Synopsis: What follows is intended to introduce the reader to GE at UCM, including its history and the internal and external contexts that have shaped its development. The section concludes with a brief description of the ways in which current GE planning relates to broader institutional planning.

GE Program Mission and History

In the University of California system, General Education (GE) by policy constitutes one-third of undergraduate course credit and in practice integrates associated co-curricular programming. General Education requirements in the UC system are related to California's Master Plan for Higher Education, in which GE is foundational (and transferable), providing breadth of study to complement specialization in major programs. At UCM, UC system-wide GE requirements (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum) are satisfied with WRI 10: *Reading and College Composition* and a Math / Quantitative Reasoning course[1]. Typically, UC students complete the other ~35-40 units of GE coursework in keeping with a menu-like system of requirements established by the faculty of the school[2] housing his/her major. Thus, at UC Merced, the majority of a student's general education coursework is determined at the school- level and delivered through courses associated with majors (other than their own) both within and outside of their school.

The design of UC Merced's GE program is informed by our institutional mission statement which states, "interdisciplinary practice in research will nourish undergraduate learning, building a foundation to connect the ways that academic disciplines understand and grapple with society's problems." A mixture of coursework and co-curricular experiences also are emphasized; UC students will engage in "education inside and outside the classroom, applying what they learn through undergraduate research, service learning and leadership development." Our location in the Central Valley also is highlighted in this mission: "[the] natural laboratory at home can extend what is known in the state, nation and world." These elements of the institutional mission were reflected in early priorities and frameworks for GE.

From the start, our campus has attracted students from throughout California. Consistently, about one-third of our undergraduates have come from the Central Valley, another one-third from the Bay Area, and the remaining one-third from Southern California. Although preparation levels vary, UC Merced students meet competitive enrollment standards. In California, the top 9% of high school students (regionally and statewide) are eligible to apply for admission to the University of California. In the past two years, UC Merced has received applications from approximately 17,000 high school and community college students annually (with enrollment targets of about 1,500 for new freshmen and transfer students). As of 2014-15, UC Merced enrolls about 5,900 undergraduates and 390 graduate students[3]. By 2020, UC Merced aims to have a total student population of 10,000, of which 90% will be undergraduates. Our campus has tended to recruit and attract a diverse undergraduate student body that

[1] For math and quantitative literacy, course requirements vary according to major requirements. For a representative requirements summary, please see: http://ssha-advising.campuscms.ucmerced.edu/students/ssha-general-education/mathematical-quantitative-reasoning-courses

[2] UC Merced has three schools: The School of Engineering, the School of Natural Sciences, and the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts.

[3] For additional enrollment statistics and other student data visit - http://ipa.ucmerced.edu/student.htm

has traditionally been under-represented in higher education. A majority of our students are the first in their families to attend college, Pell grant eligible and multi-lingual. UC Merced is among five research universities to qualify as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. This profile might seem distinctive; however, UC Merced's demographics anticipate the future of research universities, as our diversity profile is the emerging trend at most research universities within this decade.

UC Merced's general education program traces its origins to planning that took place before the first undergraduate class matriculated in 2005. In 2003, to initiate our GE program, a team of senior faculty and administrators participated in an Institute on General Education and Assessment, sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities in Asheville, North Carolina. At this Institute, the team developed a set of principles (the "Eight Guiding Principles") to guide the focus, requirements, design, and assessment of general education at UC Merced, and recommended the basic structure of the GE program (See Appendix A: 2003 GE Plan, p. 3). The structure consisted of a pair of core general education courses[4], one (Core 1) during freshmen year and the second (Core 100) during the junior year , together with a set of breadth requirements specific to each of UC Merced's three schools (Engineering, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts) for a total of about 45 units. Under this model, foundational and breadth requirements were to be delivered through school and major specific requirements. In 2004 UC Merced's founding faculty members reviewed and modified the team's recommendations, settling on a more decentralized approach in which School faculties had greater latitude in setting GE requirements. College One, UC Merced's only college, was also founded at this time to be "your home for General Education." Currently College One functions as a fiscal and administrative entity within the Office of Undergraduate Education and, in theory, all UC Merced faculty are considered members in College One. Although a College concept has not persisted in periodic or sustained discussion, early College One planning (2007) reflected some potential interest in a college system modeled on those at Santa Cruz and San Diego campuses.

In our short history, meeting the original design aspirations for a GE program has been both rewarding and challenging. Since 2005, WRI 10 and Core 1 have been required of all UC Merced students. The rest of the GE curriculum is organized into a school-based distributed course model. Core 1's integrative design features the "two cultures"[5] (with humanities and sciences perspectives) and is intended to introduce students to "UC Merced's faculty and research, with outcomes focused on writing, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and understanding events in their historical and cultural contexts" (AY 2013-2014 Course Catalog). Core 100: *The World at Home, Planning for a Complex Future* was designed to function as the second half of this Core course sequence with a similar emphasis on interdisciplinary perspectives on course topics with written, quantitative and critical thinking outcomes. (Archived Course Catalog, AY 2008). The Core 100 curriculum was delivered by Senate faculty members from each School in 2007, its inaugural year. Subsequent sustainability issues related to Senate teaching credit and Core's course format led to suspension of Core 100 as an institutional

[4] In a survey of Association of American Colleges and Universities member institutions, Hart Research Associates (2009) find that 80 percent of them "employ a distribution model in their general education program, but only 15 percent use this model alone. Many institutions also incorporate common intellectual experiences (41%), thematic required courses (36%), upper-level requirements (33%), core curriculum (30%), and/or learning communities (24%) into their GE curricula.

[5] This enduring literary phrase is from C.P. Snow's Cambridge lecture and subsequent book *The Two Cultures* (1959), which emphasized that "the intellectual life of the whole of Western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups," consisting of scientists on the one hand and literary scholars on the other. Although potentially a dated and simplified binary, the two cultures emphasis on the shortcomings of specialization has influenced our early GE planning for Core 1 and Core 100, particularly with integrative learning.

requirement in 2010. See Appendix Item J: 2009 GE report, Appendix Item C: 2011 GE report for details.

To put it another way, our early institutional context has influenced our Core ambitions and challenges. On the one hand, our small campus context has been an unusual opportunity for Senate faculty to collaborate across broad disciplines and Schools to offer a Core course. Conversely, with limited Senate faculty numbers, academic planning at an institutional scale faces the competing demands of building discipline-specific undergraduate and graduate programs. As our enrollment has grown, so has Core 1, and a Core 1 management plan is needed, particularly in light of plans to add another 3,000 students in the next six years. Looking forward, these constraints are not particular just to Core 1 (or Core 100). As the campus seeks to expand its graduate enrollment (as part of 2020) and develop a robust program of graduate education, replete with its own set of course offerings, we will continue to be constrained in how we can deliver an integrated GE experience while meeting all aspects of our mission.

In sum, although early plans for a GE program at UCM emphasize interdisciplinary goals, GE has been delivered almost entirely through discipline-specific courses associated with degree program requirements and the menu-based system of breadth specific to each school. The current distributed organization of GE also has created barriers to to systematic assessment of outcomes. Historically, the evaluation of the GE curriculum has been limited to the assessment of two standalone GE required courses, Core 1 and WRI 10, by the Merritt Writing Program. As noted in our initial accreditation materials with the 2011 Educational Effectiveness Report: "our efforts to address General Education and to help students with the transition to the university speak profoundly to two major difficulties: 1) breaking down institutional silos so that the institution focuses on integrative learning, and 2) figuring out how to assess integrative learning" (p. 46). In the Commission Action Letter that followed, team members noted that UC Merced's faculty ownership over assessment in undergraduate majors and minor programs was remarkable, followed by the recommendation to increase attention to assessing general education, co-curricular programs and administrative units (p. 2).

Now UC Merced is engaging in strategic academic planning focused on 2020, the point at which the institution is expected to have increased in total student enrollment from 6,000 to 10,000 students. The 10,000 total is anticipated to include 1000 graduate students, nearly three times what we have in Fall 2014. This important moment in our short campus history creates an opportunity to re-examine GE and to develop a sustainable GE program for the future.

The hopes and purpose of this review are to re-examine GE and to develop a sustainable, integrated program. With this review, we seek guidance in the following areas:

- Strategies for engaging a broad constituency of faculty and staff, representative of the institutional scope of GE
- Structures for allocating appropriate resources and incentives to engage Senate faculty in the oversight and delivery of GE
- Processes for systematic and sustainable assessment of GE

II. Who is doing it?

Section Synopsis: This section highlights which academic programs deliver GE curricula and provides an overview of what faculty offer instruction in GE courses.

Program Delivery: While individual schools deliver most GE content, College One is described in our course catalogs and campus website as "your home for General Education" and is situated relative to the Office of Undergraduate Education. Conceptually, College One has been a potential location for GE activities, synergistic with school requirements and major programs; however this has not been systematically discussed and developed. Since 2011, the Office of Undergraduate Education has been the administrative and fiscal home for the Merritt Writing Program[6]. In addition to housing the Merritt Writing Program and its Unit 18 lecturers[7], the Office of Undergraduate Education also administers Core 1, delivering, then, UCM's two GE requirements with WRI 10: *Reading and College Composition* and Core 1: *The World at Home*. With the exception of Core and Writing, GE at UCM is delivered in the schools..

Who teaches GE is connected to our early campus history, characteristics of current faculty (ladder rank and lecturing), and growth of undergraduate and graduate programs. Based on 2013 institutional data "Faculty Headcounts," UC Merced employs 168 Senate faculty and 159 Unit 18 lecturers (Non-Senate faculty). In 2014, the campus recruited about 40 new Senate hires. With 200 Senate faculty at the time of writing, our Senate numbers are about two-fifths the size of the next largest UC campus (Santa Cruz) and less than one-eighth the size of the largest (UCLA). Our 2020 target is 400 Senate faculty members. Our limited faculty size is to scale with a small undergraduate and graduate population; however, it is worth noting that we still need to deliver a full-scale UC campus with relatively few faculty members. This means, then, our campus employs a relatively small number of ladder rank (Senate) faculty members to develop and deliver the campus' general education, undergraduate and graduate programming, relative to this faculty group also engaging in personnel reviews, new hire recruitment, committee service (system-wide, local Senate, program, and school), course and program assessment, and faculty administrative responsibilities.

Our graduate population has not yet participated directly in the delivery of general education. At more established campuses, however, this is a potential instructor pool. Currently, our graduate population is small with 384 (Fall 2014, Graduate Student Headcounts); however enrollment targets for growth are in the near future with 2020 planning. Our graduate population is about 5% of our total student population, which is approximately half of enrollment trends at most University of California campuses at 10-12% (see UC InfoCenter, Graduate Student Data). With the expansion of a graduate population as part of 2020 enrollment planning, this instructor population is an important part of future directions.

Instructor Type: To identify instructor types for GE instruction at our campus, the GE subcommittee collaborated with Institutional Research and Decision Support to generate and analyze

[6] The MWP's Unit 18 lecturers (~60) and staff are administratively located in College One; the Senate bylaw is located in SSHA, with Senate lines (n of 3) and writing minor program in the Humanities & World Cultures unit.
[7] Unit 18 lecturers have contract-based faculty appointments. According to the University of California's Academic Personnel Manual (under APM 238), a lecturer appointment: "shall be assigned to a professionally qualified appointee not under consideration for appointment in the professorial series (in contrast to the usual expectation of Acting appointees), whose services are contracted for certain teaching duties, often for limited periods or for part-time.

instructor type data for the 23 GE courses that are taken most frequently to fulfill GE requirements. These 23 GE courses constitute approximately 70% of coursework in our current GE program (see Appendix B: Banner GE Enrollment Analysis). According to the results of analysis of instructor-type data 92% of instructors in those 23 courses are Unit-18 lecturers (see Appendix M: GE Instructor Type).

At UC Merced, Unit 18 lecturers play a significant role in the delivery of undergraduate education. With AY 2013 FTE data, UC Merced employs 112 Unit 18 lecturers relative to 166 Senate faculty (or a 40/60 ratio). According to the Academic Personnel Manual, teaching loads are heaviest for lecturers as part of the rationale for the appointment (see Academic Personnel Manual 238, 20.C). Generally, then, it is reasonable to conclude from this FTE data and anticipated course load weight, that Unit 18 lecturers deliver about half of UCM courses. In researching GE instructor type at our own campus, we anticipated that numerically and functionally Unit-18 lecturers play an important role in the delivery of GE as well.

This central role of Unit 18 lecturers in the delivery of undergraduate education is consistent with FTE data from the University of California system. While some Unit 18 lecturers are specialist hires in professional schools, more often than not Unit 18 lecturers teach lower-division, foundational courses and nearly all writing and language courses (UC Accountability Report, p. 124). Currently about 2,100 full-time Unit 18 lecturers teach with 8,700 Senate faculty colleagues (UC Office of the President: FTE, April 2014). In general, based on foundational and writing/language course data, it seems reasonable to presume that Unit 18 lecturers play a significant role in the delivery of GE at UC campuses.

At UC Merced, the extent to which GE instruction is distributed among ladder and lecturing faculty has not been systematically examined at UC Merced. To identify instructor types for GE instruction at our campus, the GE subcommittee collaborated with our Institutional Research and Decision Support to generate and analyze instructor type data for the top enrolled 23 GE courses[8]. These top 23 GE courses constitute >70% of coursework in our current GE program (see Appendix B: Banner GE Enrollment Analysis). Instructor type data (by headcount) for these 23 GE courses, from AY 2007-2013, demonstrates that 92% of GE instructors are Unit-18 lecturers (see Appendix M: GE Instructor Type).

There are two comments to make about the instructor type data. First, the reliance on Unit-18 lecturers for delivery of the top 23 GE courses has occurred due to organic growth of the campus, not because of any explicit institutional policy. Second, the data support the view, articulated in Section I of this self-study, that the early years of campus growth have focused the energies of Senate faculty on building disciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs. Because the campus has now entered a new phase of growth (evidenced, for instance, by Project 2020 strategic academic focusing), it is an opportune moment to reconcile the instructor type data with the fact that Senate faculty have authority and supervision over the curriculum (via the Standing Orders of the Regents, 105.2 b)[9]. This data may

[8] A top 25 GE course list would include WRI 10 and Core 1; these courses were excluded from this analysis as institutionally required GE. The focus is on other preparatory and elective GE coursework.

[9] The authority of the faculty over curriculum is given by the Standing Orders of the Regents, *105.2 (b) Duties, Powers, and Privileges of the Academic Senate* which states: "The Academic Senate shall authorize and supervise all courses and curricula offered under the sole or joint jurisdiction of the departments, colleges, schools, graduate divisions, or other University academic agencies approved by the Board, except that the Senate shall have no authority over courses in the Hastings College of the Law, San Francisco Art Institute, in professional schools offering work at the graduate level only, or over non-degree courses in the University Extension. No change in the curriculum of a college or professional school shall be made by the Academic Senate until such change shall have been submitted to the formal consideration of the faculty concerned."

warrant Senate and Administrative attention to inform concrete recommendations about Senate engagement in the design and delivery of GE.

As our campus develops, graduate students will be an expanding instructional group with a likely direct (as instructors of record) and indirect (as teaching assistants) roles in the delivery of GE. At research universities, graduate students can be responsible for a significant fraction of the undergraduate instruction. Statistics posted by the University of Michigan, for example, indicate that during fall and winter quarters of 2006-2007, 27% of all undergraduate courses were taught by graduate students individually or together with a faculty member. This number increased to 41% when only lower division courses were considered. Graduate student instructors are significant not only in number but function as the primary and often the exclusive agents of classroom assessment, providing feedback in support of student learning through responsibilities that include instructing discussion sections and laboratories and grading homework, papers, quizzes, projects and exams. It may be important to consider how the expansion of graduate education at our campus will relate to the design and delivery of GE. Within the broader campus context of rapid graduate student growth, from 400 to 1,000 specified in 2020 planning, we have an opportunity to coordinate initiatives, provide professional development, and develop more varied instructional engagement with GE.

III. What Do You Think You Are Doing?

Section Synopsis: This section provides an overview of how GE has been designed and implemented at UC Merced and what frameworks and principles have informed the design and implementation. At UCM, Eight Guiding Principles have organized a focus for GE outcomes. A discussion of our university and school catalog outlines a mission and set of goals for GE, in tandem with early planning documents.

Guiding Principles and GE Curricula: At UC Merced, GE's concepts and outcomes are defined by the Eight Guiding Principles, which include:

- Scientific Literacy: To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools;
- Decision Making: To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem solving;
- Communication: To convey information to and communicate and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other modes of communication;
- Self and Society: To understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethnically and culturally rich setting;
- Ethics and Responsibility: To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility;
- Leadership and Teamwork: To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others;
- Aesthetic Understanding and Creativity: To appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and the arts; and
- Development of Personal Potential: To be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well-being.

The Eight Guiding Principles are comprehensive in range. Scientific literacy and aesthetic appreciation reflect disciplinary contexts, applicable across fields of inquiry. Communication, Teamwork, and Decision-Making relate to concepts of critical thinking. Finally, Ethics, Personal Potential, and Self and Society highlight civic engagement themes.

These Eight Guiding Principles have played an important role in organizing undergraduate education and general education emphases. For example, Student Affairs worked towards intentional alignment of outcome statements for the Division of Student Affairs with the Eight Guiding Principles, which reflects early consideration of the role co-curriculum plays in student development of shared learning outcomes. This alignment also supported the idea that the Eight Guiding Principles could function as institutional outcomes, at least for Undergraduate Education as highlighted in our 2011 Educational Effectiveness

Review report[10]. Guiding Principles also serve as a reference point for proposing a new GE course. To be approved as a GE course, the course must address at least three of the Eight Guiding Principles as assessed upon course review and approval by Undergraduate Council. At this point in our campus history, then, the Eight Guiding Principles primarily inform new GE course development. Generally, these Eight Guiding Principles have not yet directly integrated into formal assessment processes, with the exception of required GE courses.

The UC Merced catalog describes our GE program as supporting "the practical skills and diverse knowledge base that [a student] will need to become an informed citizen and good problem solver after graduation" (AY 2013, p. 55). School requirements in the catalog also emphasize GE programming, noting required credits and emphasis areas for course selection. A common intellectual experience, Core 1, is described in the School of Engineering (SE) and School of Natural Sciences (SNS) catalog sections: "This course lays the foundation in skills and ideals articulated in the UC Merced Guiding Principles for General Education (see General Education section of this catalog). These include decision-making, communication, ethics, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, aesthetic understanding, creativity and an appreciation of diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts. All UC Merced students take Core 1 during their freshman year" (SE, p. 59 & SNS, p. 69). Each school includes an educational philosophy statement. Since GE is largely delivered by the schools, these educational philosophies seem relevant to understanding the broader context of GE at our campus. For example SNS emphasizes themes of discovery, stewardship and innovation; the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA) features civic responsibility, decision-making, and applied learning opportunities (SNS, p. 69; SSHA, p. 84). This panoply of school-based GE requirements, with broad educational philosophies, provides some insight into how educational experiences are conceptualized across schools.

The three schools at UCM have also established grading standards for GE requirements as well as for the major (see Appendix K: UCM Catalog, Grade Policies). In the UC system, a C is considered fair work and is often the passing standard; a D+ to D- range is technically passing and without further qualification would be considered satisfactory. With respect to successful completion of major requirements, all three UCM Schools require at least a C-. At UCM, then, there is de facto institutional agreement that a C- is a norm for major course completion. For GE course completion, however, the standards vary considerably. In the School of Engineering, a C- is the minimum standard for all coursework - pre-requisite, major, or GE. In SNS, a C- is the minimum standard for all SNS and major courses, while a D- is the minimum for GE courses taken outside of the school. This implies a double standard, as some courses taken within the school are satisfied with a C range grade; whereas those courses outside of the school can be satisfied by a D- and above. Similarly in SSHA, the catalog states that a C- is required to satisfy pre-requisites to courses and major courses; the catalog does not make any statement about minimum grade requirements for GE courses for SSHA majors. Thus, the minimum requirement defaults to institutional policy, leaving a D- as acceptable for GE courses completed in and outside of SSHA. These varied grading standards introduce important but difficult questions: Why do our standards for GE differ across schools and from major programs? In SNS and SSHA, why wouldn't we maintain high expectations for GE grades? This GE grade policy example suggests that GE would

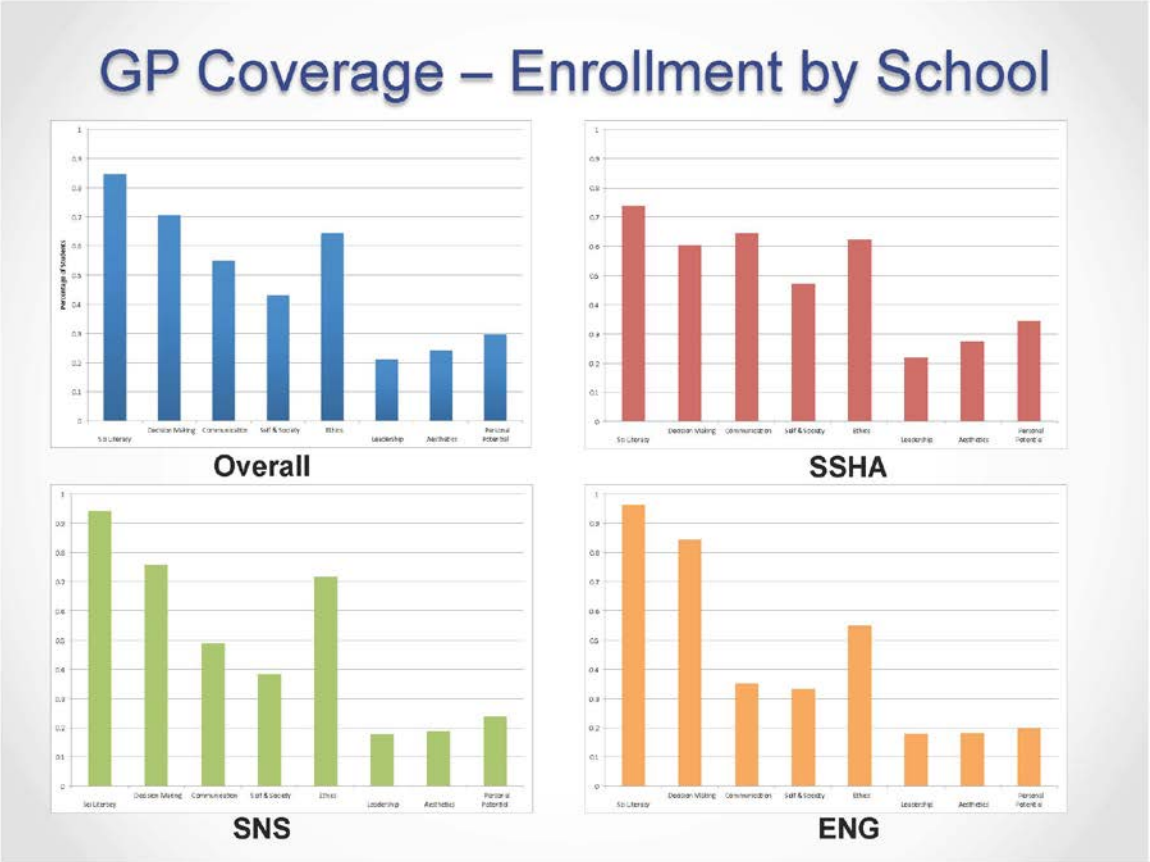
[10] For planning associated with our initial accreditation processes, Faculty Assessment Organizers completed a curriculum map to illustrate how Program Learning Outcomes map onto GE goals (as defined by the Eight Guiding Principles). This curriculum map has been the extent of formal GE assessment in majors and minor programs.

benefit from institutional perspectives and planning, in partnership with School leadership, to explore and potentially reconcile inconsistent policies.

At the course proposal level, we can contextualize how Guiding Principles are addressed thus far. From Banner data (from 2008-2013), we have had at least 350 GE courses offered at least once, with 335 in SSHA and fewer than 15 in SNS and ENGR. When analyzed by course and associated guiding principles, 88% of GE courses identified as supporting Communication, 78% for Self and Society, and 67% for Aesthetics. This analysis, then, tells us something about what faculty desire each course to include and then cumulatively what emphasis emerges.

Beyond the course level, enrollment data can show us frequency of course offerings and student seats. With enrollment data (from 2008-2013), the pattern of Guiding Principles addressed actually reverses as far as the Eight Guiding Principles that students are most likely to come into contact with via GE course offerings. Course enrollment data reveal the three predominant Guiding Principles are Scientific Literacy, Decision Making, and Ethics. When enrollment is disaggregated by school, ENGR and SNS trends are a more drastic version of this emphasis, with Aesthetics and Leadership as an infrequent focus. SSHA's guiding principles mixed with enrollment are fairly even across the spectrum (see Figure A below).

Figure A: Enrollment Data for Guiding Principles, by School



It is interesting, then, that when courses are proposed, faculty tend to emphasize Communication, Self and Society, and Aesthetics; however, in practice as far as enrollment, GE courses are focused on Scientific literacy, Decision making, and Ethics. Consistent with school-based ownership of GE, students do not have an institutional experience with GE (with the exception of Core 1). That experiences differ considerably by school suggests a range. Furthermore, we have no mechanism or assurance that our students' educational experiences intentionally address all (or even a subset) of the Eight Guiding Principles. This confusion about programmatic design and limited contact with the Eight Guiding Principles are echoed by student perspectives, summarized on page 17. Whereas the catalog suggests that students will experience breadth and depth, with broad exposure to the Guiding Principles (see Appendix Item G: School Catalog, GE Requirements), this data suggests limited accomplishment of these goals.

It is worth considering GE in the context of schools and major programs, given that our current GE course structures relate to these requirements. As a parallel example, for our accreditation review in 2018, we have addressed core competencies in writing, oral communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy through our major programs[11]. In both institutional outcome assessment examples of GE Guiding Principles or Core competencies, we might anticipate that some major programs may align more or less easily with emphases. For example in the Humanities, some of the Eight Guiding Principles and GE requirements are likely to align easily with disciplinary goals, e.g. writing, oral communication, and aesthetic appreciation. Conversely, GE requirements and Core competencies for mathematical and quantitative reasoning are less likely to align with a traditional humanities education. In sum, review of institutional outcomes through major fields has practical advantages, with ongoing considerations about the extent to which these institutional emphases should be demonstrated across the disciplinary programs.

[11] In WASC's chapter on Educational Quality and references in thes 2013 Handbook, CFR 2.2a asserts that baccalaureate programs must: "ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking."

IV. How are you doing it?

Section Synopsis: This section describes curricular experiences associated with GE courses at UCM. Of particular focus will be how GE is currently designed and implemented, particularly in relationship to major programs.

Overview: General Education at UC Merced involves requirements that are system-wide, institutional, and school-based. Each of these three requirements will be described in this section. System-wide, the University of California requires foundational courses in writing and math, and our campus requires Core 1 as a common intellectual experience. Each school then has its own set of GE requirements, all of which generally focus on coursework to introduce (or reinforce) skill development or incentivize breadth and cross-disciplinary experiences. These breadth and cross-disciplinary GE requirements tend to be non-specific, and are almost entirely fulfilled in SSHA. Outside of academic units, there are many promising activities and programs that could be integrated into GE programming.

We have found that so far, UC Merced's GE requirements are almost entirely driven by major and school requirements; however, it is unclear how exactly GE courses integrate with each major. In theory and generally, GE can provide the coherence and integrative opportunities to complement the more narrow focus of disciplinary degree programs. Broad engagement with institutional priorities, relative to the design of major programs, could inform GE re-design efforts as described in further detail under Future Directions.

GE Courses Required of All UC Merced Undergraduates: The following descriptions highlight elements of GE courses, required of all UC Merced students. As a reminder, WRI 10 and Mathematical/Quantitative Reasoning are UC GE requirements and Core 1 is a UCM GE requirement.

Initial GE planning required Core 1 as lower-division and Core 100 as upper-division common intellectual experiences. Since these courses are institutionally-specific, the following are course descriptions to briefly situate these emphases:

- **Core 1: The World at Home:** Core 1 "organizes the academic fields it incorporates by means of an integrated, cumulative lecture and assignment sequence in which students actively make connections across disciplines and cultivate an overall information literacy, with an emphasis on quantitative and qualitative analysis." (Appendix H: GE Mini Study, Core 1)
- **Core 100: The World at Home, Planning for the Future in a Complex World:** Core 100 is currently suspended. The catalog course description is as follows: "Second half of the Core course sequence, building on the foundation of UC Merced's general education program and has a strong emphasis on writing, quantitative literacy, critical thinking, and understanding events in their historical and cultural contexts. The inaugural theme is a study of how individuals and societies can make the best choices in preparing for an uncertain future. The unifying theme in these modules is contemporary California which acts as a common reference point highlighting the regional implications of global events or the global consequences of seemingly local choices. A wide range of interdisciplinary perspectives from the arts, humanities, social sciences, life and physical sciences, and engineering are brought to bear on the course topics. Upper-division-level quantitative literacy skills and writing ability is expected" [catalog description link]

Assessment of Core 1, WRI 10 (and historically even Core 100) has been regular and managed through the Merritt Writing Program. MWP faculty meet twice monthly in Core 1 and twice per semester in

WRI 10 to review sample work, calibrate grading, develop curricula, and identify professional development needs. As noted in the mini-study, both courses serve majors; however, without more information about GE outcomes throughout the university, the transfer of knowledge and skills from these courses to disciplinary contexts and GE programming is largely uncertain.

In principle, Core 1 and WRI 10 are designed to be first-year courses (Core 1, in particular, by catalog description). School of Engineering students complete WRI 10 in their sophomore year. Without institutional requirement policies, though, enrollment trends differed from course design. During 2011-2013, about 40% of Core 1 enrollment was sophomore-level. In May 2013 the GE subcommittee with Undergraduate Council instituted a Core 1 unit limit to encourage freshman enrollment, which seems to be shifting the focus to a first-year experience course. Continued efforts are needed to position WRI 10 and Core 1 in an effective, deliberate GE course sequence.

The following descriptions highlight key elements of our institutionally and campus required GE courses: Core 1, WRI 10, and Mathematical / Quantitative Reasoning, with a focus on how this foundation is designed to serve majors.

Core 1: Core 1 has been a campus requirement since fall 2005. From 2005 to 2013, 5439 UCM undergraduates completed Core 1 (see Appendix O: Core 1 and WRI 10 Enrollment and Grade Data). Core 1 is a writing-intensive lecture and discussion course designed to introduce students to UC Merced's faculty research expertise. Our lecture hall can seat 350 students, and two sections of Core 1 are offered in the fall and three are offered in the spring. The weekly one-hour lecture is presented by guest speakers, most of whom are UC Merced faculty members. The discussion section instructor is the instructor of record and she or he meets with students twice weekly for a total of three hours. Discussion sections enrollments are capped at 20 students; approximately 26 sections are offered in the fall and 52 sections in the spring. Core 1 is also offered in the summer (2-3 sections); summer demand has been limited so far but may trend upwards with the unit limit policy, which is described in Appendix N: Core 1 unit limit policy.

The course takes an interdisciplinary approach to explore how different experts view the world and analyze information both qualitatively and quantitatively, based on C. P. Snow's "two cultures" of – roughly -- science and literature. Core 1 is organized into modules by topics of faculty research interest. These modules address, broadly, the overall theme of Core 1, "The World at Home," beginning with origins of the universe. For example, the "origins" module includes lectures and readings about local Maidu Indian cosmology (from Anthropology and History faculty) and the Big Bang theory (from Physics and Astronomy faculty). Core 1 draws on a range of disciplinary knowledge and practice—from varieties of statistical analysis and explanation that are common in the sciences (including but not limited to such fields as astronomy, computational biology, environmental hydrology, geoengineering, and public health) to means of language and argument analysis that are common in the humanities and social sciences (including but not limited to such fields as cognitive science, political science, sociology, anthropology, literature, and art). Course assignments include journals about readings, two quantitative assignments, an analysis piece, a collaborative project, and a cumulative essay.

WRI 10: Reading and Composition focuses on "effective use of language, analysis and argumentation, organization and strategies for creation, revision and editing" (UCM Catalog, AY 2012-2013, p. 179). With an emphasis on rhetorical traditions, WRI 10 is designed to prepare students to write evidence-

based argumentative texts. Capped at 20 per section, WRI 10 includes essays, oral presentations, an annotated bibliography, research paper and final portfolio that culminate in at least 8,000 words. Portfolios and diagnostic essays are reviewed twice a semester by all full-time MWP lecturers for program assessment, grading calibration, and curriculum review. For AY 2007-2013 or 11 semesters, 4,342 undergraduates completed WRI 10, with 91.5% pass rate (in most cases on first try) and a grade mean of 2.92 (see Appendix O: Core 1 and WRI 10 Enrollment and Grades Data). Intended course outcomes include synthesizing complex ideas, arguing with a rhetorical purpose, integrating feedback and primary/secondary evidence, and collaborating successfully with peers. These course outcomes relate to all of UCM's Eight Guiding Principles, particularly Communication, Decision-making, and Self and Society[12].

Mathematical / Quantitative Reasoning: This focus and content of this differ by area of study; potential emphases include calculus, logic, spatial analysis, and statistics. For example, majors in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts often satisfy this requirement through applied data analysis courses in disciplines such as economics, psychology, sociology, and political science. An example of such a course is Psychology 10; this course satisfies the Mathematical / Quantitative Reasoning requirement and is taken primarily by SSHA majors, Psychology minors and Human Biology majors. PSY 10 has served a considerable number of GE students[13], second only to the calculus series (Math 11 and 12 and Math 21 and 22) offered by the Applied Mathematics department.

With the case of this requirement, the areas of study inform how quantitative / mathematical literacy will be completed. The strength in having major programs develop applied mathematics courses that suit disciplinary needs is the potential for high levels of integration and relevance. Some disciplines, though, are disadvantaged by this arrangement, particularly Humanities programs (English, History, Arts, and Spanish) that, historically, do not have an applied mathematics approach to teaching quantitative literacy. *An outstanding question, then, would be ways to define and develop quantitative literacy within majors and at our campus.*

GE School and Major Requirements: At UC Merced, school requirements include 35-40 units of further GE coursework in addition to institutional requirements. Major requirements may define, more or less prescriptively, what GE courses are needed to be completed and why.

In AY 2013, the GE Subcommittee worked with the Office of the Registrar to identify all GE courses and create Banner fields for related Guiding Principles to conduct enrollment analysis. Our focus was on (1) how many courses are designated as GE, (2) which Guiding Principles were identified with GE course approvals and (3) how often students take each GE course (with option to disaggregate by school, major, and other factors). From our review of this data, we were able to identify the scale of UCM's menu system, particularly given our early history and limited number of undergraduate major programs. Nearly every proposed SSHA course is identified as GE (~400). Fewer than 12 science (SNS) and

[12] Decision Making: To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem solving; Communication: To convey information to and communicate and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other modes of communication; Self and Society: To understand and value diverse perspectives in both the global and community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethnically and culturally rich setting.

[13] According to institutional course enrollment data, from fall 2009 to fall 2013, 2,011 GE students were served by PSY 10. Given our current scale of 6,000 students, this is a considerable piece of quantitative / mathematical reasoning GE credit.

engineering (ENGR) courses are identified as GE; all 12 are lower-division, foundational requirements. As noted elsewhere in the report, 23 courses account for approximately 70% of GE enrollments. Taken together, these data suggest the need to examine the extent to which current practices achieve the goals for breadth we claim for GE.

Upper-Division GE and Related Capstone Experiences: For GE requirements at the upper-division, our campus has attempted two models for a common GE course experience at the upper-division level, with Core 100 and Writing in the Disciplines.

Core 100: A required upper-division Core model (Core 100) was offered in 2006-2007 and then suspended by Undergraduate Council in 2010 for further review and recommendations. Core 100 provided a common intellectual experience, focused on collaborative learning opportunities with an interdisciplinary team-authored report on a local issue relevant to UCM research expertise. Similar to Core 1, the course included a lecture with credit-bearing discussion sections. Core 100 was led by Senate faculty, with MWP leadership on the planning committee and volunteer writing workshops to support teams. Because of concerns about the sustainability of the course as student enrollments grew, Core 100 was suspended by Undergraduate Council in 2010 for further review and recommendations. In 2011, the Interim Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education (Jack Vevea) coordinated a team of UCM faculty to participate in an AAC&U retreat to determine if there were cost-effective alternative general education models that could sustain the Core 100 ideal (Appendix C: 2011 GE Report). *An outstanding question generally is how to organize upper-division GE and the extent to which common intellectual experiences and capstones should be our continued focus*.

Writing in the Disciplines: After the first year of Core 100 and prior to its suspension by UGC, an interim solution was to require WRI 100: Advanced Composition as an upper-division alternative. This interim requirement created a focus on writing in the disciplines within majors and schools. The WRI 100 requirement was dissolved with the suspension of Core 100 by Undergraduate Council in 2010; however, upper-division writing courses are required by majors in each of the schools. Since 2006, the School of Natural Sciences has had a communications requirement that is met almost entirely by WRI 116: Writing in the Natural Sciences. The Psychology program collaborated with the MWP in 2010 to require WRI 101: Writing in Psychology, which largely serves graduating seniors. In 2012, the School of Engineering required that all Engineering majors take an upper-division writing course, WRI 119: Writing in Engineering.

Historically with Core 100 and interim solutions, upper-division GE has included a writing emphasis. The extent to which this continues to be an institutional priority is an ongoing question, along with what our expectations are for upper-division GE experiences.

V. How well are you doing it, and how do you know?

Section Synopsis: This section provides an overview of current GE assessment practices, with attention to UCM student, faculty and staff perspectives on GE learning outcomes. This part of the report concludes with a summary of issues we face in defining and assessing GE learning outcomes.

To establish baseline GE data, the GE subcommittee (beginning in 2012) initiated several assessment projects to document faculty feedback, student experiences, and significant enrollment patterns. In general, we have learned from this self study process that UCM does not have a defined GE program, either by organization or recognition by current faculty, staff and students. Students, staff and faculty struggle to describe GE at UCM, and there seems to be little consensus or awareness of what GE is, how it's implemented, or what purposes it serves.

GE Experiences: To understand how faculty, staff, and students at UCM experience GE, we conducted focus groups and analyzed relevant data from the UCM Graduating Senior Survey.

Faculty & Staff Focus Groups: The GE Subcommittee held focus group meetings with faculty and staff, followed by a brief survey about the Eight Guiding Principles (Appendix F: Faculty & Staff, Focus Group Letter and Survey). We met with all School Curriculum Committees, Undergraduate Council, Psychology professors (a program that offers many of the most popular GE courses), Academic Advisors, Librarians, instructors in the Merritt Writing Program, Student Affairs administrators, and Bright Success Center staff.

Our goals and interview questions were highlighted in the invitation memo sent to faculty and staff members: "We are interested in your broader perspective as faculty and staff focused on undergraduate education at UC Merced. The following guiding questions will inform our discussion: *What do you think does or should distinguish our graduates? What general abilities and knowledge do we want to see in any student who graduates from UC Merced? What role does GE play in these aspirations?*" The agenda included a brief overview of GE at our campus, discussion of the meaning of the degree and the role of GE in the broader educational experiences of UCM gradates, and highlights from Banner enrollment data (summarized in pages 10-11). Following these meetings, a survey about the relevance of the Eight Guiding Principles circulated for feedback.

Discussion in these sessions tended to emphasize guiding ideas for GE, with commentary about the distinctive aspects of an education at UC Merced. From these group interviews, the following are some very brief abstracts, with complete notes as Appendix Q: GE Faculty and Staff Focus Groups, 2014:

- **School Curriculum Committee, Engineering**: Some GE concepts that emerged were providing global and local contexts to help students see where they can apply their skills as Engineers in "developing higher-order skills," "being well-informed" and "asking big questions."

- **School Curriculum Committee, Natural Sciences**: "When we teach, we only teach the successful ideas; we don't teach that there was a lot of confusion, dissent, lack of clarity in the process of coming to what we now teach as answers; teach the idea of the progression of ideas; the process of scientific discovery. The history of science, and the history of scientific methodology. Don't have time to teach these things….. in the discipline."

- **Academic Advising**: GE tended to be defined as educational paths, with learning communities focused on topics of interest throughout the degree program. Another way to think about this model is a cohort that moves through the

degree together focusing on common interests and related courses, with opportunities to work in learning communities, connect coursework themes and skills in co-enrolled coursework, and develop more completely as a "whole person."

- **Student Affairs**: Interdisciplinary experiences tended to be emphasized as the aspiration of GE at our campus, defined as being able to synthesize information from multiple perspectives. GE is an opportunity to introduce this concept, integrating curricular and co-curricular elements begins to frame this definition in applied contexts;

- **Library**: Specific to our campus, we can provide students with opportunities to experience "liberal education," which involves fostering the ability "to see this bigger picture preparation as researcher through more than one lens."

- **Merritt Writing Program**: GE experiences could further foster "more courses that allow students to see their histories" and further experience with social, cultural and academic discourses.

- **Bright Success Center**: As a campus, we have an opportunity to encourage students to identify their life experiences, engage with interdisciplinary scholarship, and deliberately recognize and build their problem-solving skills. GE can help "students unpack, reframe and articulate their experiences – not only what they know but also in what context they know it."

After the interviews, participants were invited to complete a brief survey about the Eight Guiding Principles. Respondents were divided evenly (20% each) among the Library, MWP, SSHA, SNS and Student Affairs (n of 16). In general, the survey confirms that all participants find the Guiding Principles important but broad. Also noteworthy is how our current practice of a defined order for the Eight Guiding Principles might incorrectly suggest priority. Overall, a desire for further discussion and clarification about GE principles is evident from the survey responses. The overarching result of our focus group work was that there is no consistent understanding of GE at UC Merced.

Student Perspectives: The following summarize indirect evidence of student learning collected in AY 2013, with GE focus groups (by Schools and with Student Affairs units) and institutional survey data.

GE Focus Groups: Student and Academic Affairs: In Spring 2013, the GE subcommittee coordinated with Students Assessing Teaching and Learning (SATAL) to provide focus group meetings with students (Appendix D: GE Student Focus Group Report, Academic Affairs). In both focus groups, the goal was to brainstorm the purpose of GE and to self-assess proficiency with each of the Eight Guiding Principles. The reports reflect the perspective of engaged and informed students (n of 42 for Academic Affairs and n of 16 for Student Affairs), who took the time to attend an interview and provide feedback without clear reward. In all three schools, students described research opportunities through academic and co-curricular units as a source of achieving what they understood to be the goals of GE (the Eight Guiding Principles), particularly decision-making, teamwork, and ethics. These students reported valuing GE as it is "very important to increase their proficiency in all the areas described in the Guiding Principles, particularly with success after college" (p. 3). This value is quite broad, however, with differing priorities about which GE outcomes might be most significant: "While some students felt that *communication, leadership and teamwork,* and *decision-making* are the most important ones, others considered *self and society* and *aesthetic understanding and creativity* as relevant abilities to develop." (p. 2). Two patterns emerge from these data. First, students reported that the Guiding Principles are not explicitly being taught in GE courses. Second, Guiding Principles are prioritized by students without clear guiding reasons (e.g. emphases parallel to priorities of the major or school requirements). Consensus for further GE development was relatively clear by comparison, for example: "SNS native

students mentioned that their GE courses are not geared towards developing *aesthetic understanding and creativity*. SNS students also discussed how large GE courses limited professor-student or peers' interaction, and thus, hindered students' proficiency with *communication, decision-making, leadership, and teamwork."* This suggests that GE experiences differ not only by requirements and standards by school, but possibly by format and pedagogy.

The student interviews noted that activities in extra-curricular projects compensated for what GE courses lacked, so a comparable study was conducted with SATAL and Student Affairs' Assessment Coordinator, Emily Langdon. The Division of Student Affairs used the same focus group questions that the GE Subcommittee used in Academic units. This Division of Student Affairs focus group report (see Appendix E: GE Student Focus Group Report, Student Affairs) also reflects feedback from a highly motivated group of students, rather than a cross-section of our campus, and had a limited number of participants (n= 16). Nevertheless, students reported GE guiding principles they perceived were cultivated by their campus employment, including communication, gaining appreciation for human differences, and learning about their sense of self and impact on other people. Students mentioned repeatedly the value of practice and feedback on their learning, noting significant gains in confidence. As one example, a student employed as a residence life lead notes: "knowing that I can communicate with 1,500 residents daily [revealed to me that] what I do and say is important."

Several conclusions might be drawn from these data: These students (1) value GE and anticipate that it will be relevant to post-graduate professional and academic employment, (2) suggest that GE outcomes and guiding concepts are not explicitly taught in GE coursework, (3) report that extra-curricular activities reinforce and cultivate valued GE outcomes. Descriptions of GE programming were vague and confused, which suggests that GE programming is not transparent or clear to a highly engaged student population. The general response from these students indicates that GE programming needs clarification and focus. Follow-up questions include: To what extent is GE planned and represented to our students as a *program* at our campus? And, are current students invested in GE as an integral part of their educational experience, and why or why not?

Graduating Senior Survey: In 2012, we collaborated with our Institutional Research and Decision Support group to pilot questions about GE on the Graduating Senior Survey, with a set of overview questions followed by a review of each Guiding Principle's relevance to the major. The following chart briefly summarizes overall responses on a School-level (on a four point scale with 4 being A large degree, 3, a moderate degree, 2, A slight degree, 1 No degree)

#	Question	ENGR Mean (n 43)	SSHA Mean (n 192)	SNS Mean (n 81)
1	the Eight Guiding Principles were explicitly addressed in your general education courses	2.35	2.09	1.94
2	your general education courses contributed to learning in your major	2.23	2.08	2.11
3	courses in your major contributed to your development in the areas defined by the Eight Guiding Principles	1.77	1.76	1.73
4	Core 1 addressed making connections among academic disciplines	2.74	2.67	2.46
5	other general education courses addressed making connections among academic disciplines	2.53	2.21	2.16
6	courses in your major addressed making connections among academic disciplines	1.81	1.70	1.81

On average, students reported that their GE courses addressed connections among disciplines to a slight degree. Further, according to these data, major coursework may not heavily feature the Eight Guiding Principles or provide opportunity to integrate disciplines. This information is in some ways fairly intuitive in distinguishing major coursework from GE (non-major coursework). Still, we might consider this feedback relative to our current GE design which is delivered primarily through the majors. Integration of academic disciplines may be a distinctive function of GE, at least as reported here in initial UCM Senior Survey data. Furthermore, given our stated intentions for GE, as providing breadth and depth experiences and supporting interdisciplinary learning opportunities, this information provides useful insight into the form and functions of GE relative to major programs.

GE Learning Outcomes Assessment: So far, GE has not yet been fully reviewed within major or stand alone minor programs, with the exception of our required GE courses (WRI 10 and Core 1) in the Merritt Writing Program. Foundational GE courses more broadly have yet to be examined directly. The extent to which lower-division courses relate to graduation outcomes (as a result of majors) is a continued area of exploration at our campus. Further, addressing the extensive elective menu of GE, and attendant needs for integration and definition, will move us forward on greater infrastructure on which to base GE assessment (either within or outside major programs). *At this point in our campus history, there has not been a sustained or systematic review of GE courses or the GE program.*

To briefly summarize what has been evaluated: Since 2009, Core 1 participated in annual review. Similarly, the Writing Minor report includes extensive assessment information about WRI 10. These reviews have been voluntary and do not necessarily fit within the formal expectations of minor and major program reporting. The current expectation for annual assessment of majors and standalone minors, though, may be a place for examining GE outcomes.

In summer 2014, the GE subcommittee conducted a GE mini self-study with Core 1 and WRI 10 coordinators, which synthesized assessment information about these foundational GE experiences and skills. This cumulative mini self-study is based on annual assessment reports about these courses (from 2009-2014). The focus of this mini self-study report is on the intended outcomes of Core 1 and WRI 10,

how achievement of those outcomes is assessed and measured, and how data are used to improve the courses.

Core 1: All Core 1 instructors meet on a bi-weekly basis to review student work and discuss assignments. From the point of view of the Core 1 mini self-study authors: "Most of the course's best practices have come from discussions in these meetings (where we generate assignments and review sample student work). Additionally, our annual assessment of student work has contributed greatly to our sense of student success in Core 1, and to means of codifying and encouraging it in course outcomes and instruction**"** (see Appendix H: GE Mini Study, Core 1, p. 2).

Annual review of student work (reported here and described more fully in FAO reports) includes high-middle-low samples, measured by standard course grading rubrics (p. 3). It is noted that "assessment data have informed our revision of assignments so that students are better positioned to fulfill course outcomes and instructors are better positioned to measure them." (p. 2) When asked which course outcomes students seem able to demonstrate most effectively, the Core 1 coordinators state: "collaborate in sharing expertise, making connections, and assembling knowledge; demonstrate scholarly processes characteristic of creative/critical problem-solving; critique diverse perspectives from scientific, historical, artistic, and personal standpoints; and appreciate ethical considerations and decision making in local and global contexts" (p. 4). It is worth noting that the quantitative and cumulative essay assignments are designed to foster these emphases, so the reported refinement of these activities may relate to strengthening students' ability to engage in these expectations. Ongoing challenges include the ways in which Core 1 students "are less seasoned at analyzing idea critically and in a sustained manner, they tend to lack requisite organization and study skills to regularly assemble informed, demonstrative arguments about quantitative and qualitative information" (p. 4). Reported course developments have focused on extending opportunities to practice these desired but often challenging skills and knowledge sets.

Student perspectives and experiences are also noted. Sections of students review lectures, which is the basis for Core 1 feedback to the lecturing faculty about suggested developments and refinements. Students also have opportunities to provide feedback on the course via focus group sessions (pizza lunch with coordinators), reflective writing, and course evaluations. The Core 1 coordinators reflect briefly on what they have learned so far about their students: "We are routinely impressed by the degree of imaginative, informed collaboration and problem solving among Core 1 students, across disciplines, personalities, and backgrounds" (p. 4).

WRI 10: Sample work from WRI 10 is routinely reviewed, via program-wide diagnostic exams and portfolio evaluations. All full-time MWP lecturers participate in these small group reviews (6-8 faculty in a session) to evaluate student work, refine curriculum design, calibrate grading, and share pedagogical practices. The diagnostic exams are pre and post measures of student performance, historically reflecting incremental improvements from entry to exit. Final portfolios are assigned in nearly all MWP courses, with each section of the portfolio specific to a program learning outcome. Sample work and reflective letters from these portfolios provide direct and indirect measures of course and in effect program learning outcomes.

For indirect evidence of student learning, MWP course evaluations are noted as part of routine program assessment and teaching effectiveness reviews (with a sequence of sections focused on self-assessment,

skill evaluation, teaching effectiveness and then open commentary). Ratings are according to frequency to characterize, for example, how often a skill was practiced or a teaching attribute was exhibited. For skills, students are asked to respond to the course's effectiveness in supporting the following: giving and attending to feedback, analyzing reading, developing a topic, composing an argument and integrating evidence, engaging in the writing process, communicating to an academic audience, and applying professional and academic ethics. With data focused on AY 2012-2014, ratings for all WRI 10 sections illustrate that skill evaluations are in the top quartile, with >85% for these skills being frequently to always supported by the course design (Appendix O: MWP WRI 10 & Core 1 Course Evaluation Data).

The WRI 10 mini self-study notes with a pattern of struggle with critical reading and analysis skills. As supporting evidence, diagnostics have historically been rated as unsatisfactory because of an "incomplete understanding of text or topic" along with "illogical response to original text." These observations about analytical reading skill development intersect with our campus' Decision Making guiding principles with "the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem solving." Continued attention to the course and institutional outcome an ability to summarize, evaluate and use information effectively could be a priority to strengthen outcomes for struggling WRI 10 students.

Student ability to complete WRI 10 in the first attempt is high at 90%. Faculty review of WRI 10 skills tends to benchmark mainly local standards, with occasional opportunity to include national data. The AY 2012 review focused on ethics, which is both a program learning outcome ["*Apply professional ethical standards to the research process and its public representation*"] as well as a GE emphasis, with the Guiding Principle on Ethics and Responsibility ["*To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility*"]. In this report, the assessment focus was to compare WRI 10 student integration of evidence with national evaluation of similar strategies (published by the Citation Project). WRI 10 students' purposeful integration of sources exceeded expectations set from national studies (25% versus 9%). Continued assessment of ethics is described in the WRI 10 mini self-study (Appendix #) as part of the campus' current Assessment in Action grant, which is part of a national library project to increase data about student learning outcomes and broad impacts of librarian support. With an emphasis on relevant and credible source selection, this spring semester the MWP instructors and librarians are evaluating WRI 10 research papers and bibliographies.

Conclusion

Our assessment efforts show that a robust and systematic review of GE outcomes is needed. To achieve this, our campus must confront a multi-faceted set of challenges, including an unconstrained menu system, limited Senate engagement with delivery of GE, and the need for improved GE-related communication between disciplines, schools, and Academic/Student Affairs units. Our advantage, though, is that we remain a relatively small campus, with the potential to leverage engagement with GE programming, relative to related academic and institutional planning initiatives.

To re-engage our campus with GE as a program, our GE subcommittee concluded that it is important to contextualize any re-envisioning of GE within the larger goals for undergraduate education and the meaning of the baccalaureate degree at UC Merced. This focus informed our 2014 GE retreat, which was organized to engage program faculty leads (from >80% of undergraduate programs) and student

affairs units in a renewed discussion of GE programming, in the broader context of the hallmarks of undergraduate education. This academic year (AY 2014-2015), we are engaging in extensive outreach efforts to confirm retreat conclusions, design a GE mission statement, and translate the Eight Guiding Principles into GE outcome statements. In sum, we need to define our GE aspirations and program to develop the systematic means to evaluate GE courses and experiences at our campus. The framework of GE recommendations that emerged from this retreat will guide the next section on Future Directions.

Generally, several aspects of UCM's GE program need further development and input which include:

- Clarifying the purpose of general education at UC Merced in relation to the larger intentions of the baccalaureate degree;
- Strengthening communication of GE program intentions to all stakeholders, including most importantly students, faculty (ladder rank and lecturing) and all program leadership;
- Reformulating the Eight Guiding Principles to develop a GE mission statement, principles and outcomes;
- Coordinating existing GE curricula towards deliberate GE experiences;
- Recommending GE assessment practices that engage a broad set of stakeholders (Senate and Non-Senate faculty, staff, and students);
- Providing the means to systematically review and coordinate a GE program within the constraints of our campus goals and resource capacity.

VI. Future directions/planning

Note to readers: Should there be less text and more questions to focus the attention and assistance of the review team? Please advise.

Section Synopsis: This section summarizes our institutional context, particularly the capacity and constraints that inform current planning. Our broader purpose is to emphasize emergent themes that guide our efforts with a re-design of GE. To build engagement with these efforts, our recent GE retreat (May 2014) involved faculty and staff in developing an initial framework for situating GE within the broader hallmarks of an undergraduate degree at UC Merced. Retreat participants were asked: *"Given the role of GE in UC Merced baccalaureate degrees, what should GE "look like"? What experiences should it include?"* with five recommendations that followed. Those recommendations frame our future directions discussion for GE.

Institutional Context: Being a new and small research university, UC Merced has inspired unusual opportunities to collaborate across disciplines, which have shaped some undergraduate, graduate and GE programming. This self study highlights how early plans and current aspirations for a GE program at UCM tend to emphasize interdisciplinary goals; however, GE has been almost entirely delivered through discipline-specific courses associated with degree program requirements and the menu-based system of breadth specific to each school. UCM needs to operate as a full-scale UC campus, with limited faculty numbers (both ladder rank and lecturing). Further, we are entering another significant phase of enrollment growth, which involves strategic academic focusing to develop a range of academic programs, grow graduate student enrollment, and define research emphases distinctive to our campus. These circumstances inform our capacity and constraints with re-designing GE.

Several notable details emerge from our study of the current GE program: (1) GE programming is largely informed by school and major requirements, with differing expectations, standards, and pedagogical emphases; (2) Although we aspire for breadth experiences, 23 GE course provide >70% of programming for all students; (3) Our GE instructor type data reveals the Unit-18 lecturers primarily deliver GE, as 92% of the instructor type for these 23 GE courses; (4) Students and faculty report valuing GE in relationship to major programs but struggle to describe GE's key attributes; (5) Students see the co-curriculum as significant to their development of key outcomes (drawing on focus group results on page 17), but the institution lacks an institutional strategy for integrating GE across the campus; (6) Guiding Principles are not GE outcomes; we have an ongoing need to define a mission, guiding principles and outcomes for GE program, relative to institutional priorities for undergraduate education. *At this stage in our campus' development, we need to move beyond GE being a collection of courses to a coherent framework, with shared responsibility across the institution for planning and implementation.*

High-order questions about the meaning of the degree and the role of GE within it contextualize our GE re-design efforts. Moving forward, we need to articulate a structure for GE that achieves campus goals, recognizes the role of GE in the broad priorities of undergraduate education, systematically integrates the co-curriculum into GE, identifies the experiences that all students should have as part of GE (particularly high impact practices), and considers the role of GE in student success. In light of our institutional context and GE data, we seek guidance in a few important, broad areas:

- Strategies for engaging a broad constituency of faculty and staff, representative of the institutional scope of GE;
- Structures for allocating appropriate resources and incentives to engage Senate faculty in the oversight and delivery of GE;
- Processes for systematic and sustainable assessment of GE.

The following is overview of our strategy to gather input and establish a framework for GE recommendations.

Institutional Capacity Building -- GE Retreat: From our self study data, it was evident that broad institutional engagement was needed to establish a framework for revisiting our institutional goals for GE, including the GE mission, guiding principles and outcomes (for learning and student success?). Wide consensus building about fundamental priorities and recommendations could help inform re-design efforts as well as engage faculty and staff in the broad issues of developing a GE program. A retreat was organized to bring together a representative group of faculty and staff to initiate this effort.

Broadly speaking our goal was to re-imagine UC Merced's GE program in light of the institution's mission. A comprehensive team was assembled, including 32 faculty (from 80% of undergraduate majors) and staff members representing academic advising, career services, housing and student life. The University Librarian, Dean of Students, and Provost participated as well. The retreat was organized to address three, related questions:

1. Thinking ahead to 2020, what is the meaning of the baccalaureate degree at UC Merced?"
2. What is the role of General Education in the baccalaureate degree at UC Merced?
3. Building on the hallmarks of a baccalaureate degree and the role of GE in the degree at UC Merced, what should General Education "look like" at UC Merced?

Sessions began with a plenary introduction to a guiding question followed by breakouts during which retreat participants addressed the question in small teams (see Appendix R: GE Retreat Packet). Teams presented results followed by group discussion to identify emerging themes and synthesize contributions. During the summer of 2014, the GE Subcommittee developed a Retreat Synthesis based on meeting minutes and team notes. Over the summer, a draft of the Retreat Synthesis was circulated to all retreat participants for commentary (resulting copy is Appendix O: GE Retreat Synthesis). The next step was to engage a wider audience to both confirm emphases and expand results. In October, VP/Dean Whitt and Chair Zanzucchi presented the Retreat Synthesis at Undergraduate Council (n of 18) and Division Council's open forum (n of 35). During this time, the GE Subcommittee developed outreach to undergraduate programs, with a letter and questionnaire for faculty to review and comment on the retreat synthesis due 1 February 2015. With this strategy, all academic programs are being directly consulted on the Retreat Synthesis as part of our campus' re-envisioning of GE programming. A similar approach is being developed to work with undergraduates in the early spring, via classroom interviews and student organization meetings. The Retreat Synthesis, then, is a working draft of guiding concepts that can inform strategic planning.

This future directions section will focus on the five recommendations from the GE retreat describing what GE "***should look like***" at our campus based on hallmarks of undergraduate education[14]. Although

[14] Initial hallmarks of an undergraduate program at UC Merced include: (1) Depth and breadth in academic and intellectual preparation, consistent with the values of UCM as a small research university, (2) Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and

this synthesis and set of recommendations is an evolving document with current campus conversations about the emphases, this is a basis on which to focus our discussion of the future of GE at our campus.

(1) Connect Senate faculty in the design and in delivery of GE

A notable issue highlighted in the self study is Senate faculty engagement in the design and delivery of GE (see Section II: Instructor Type). Resource planning and prioritization for GE needs serious attention, as discussed in GE committee reports (see Appendices C: 2011 GE Report and J: 2009 GE Report) and this self study. Notably, we currently have no dedicated GE FTE, with the top 23 GE courses taught almost entirely by lecturers.

A key outstanding question is how to engage Senate faculty in the design and delivery of GE, which relates broadly to governance issues. In our brief history, GE committee reports have tended to address faculty governance issues with GE, broadly in terms of an unmanaged menu system and specifically in terms of Core 100's sustainability[15]. As noted in the self-study (p. 3-5), College One is a fiscal and administrative structure that is described in catalogs as "your home for General Education." College One could play specific role in the organization and delivery of GE relative to school requirements and educational philosophies.

The future and direction of College One remains a significant question (and planning opportunity) at our campus, with the potential to serve as an alternative and nevertheless complementary structure for organizing educational initiatives, relative to our schools. Models within the UC system would include Santa Cruz and San Diego (based on the much longer history of Yale University's approach to undergraduate education). Closely parallel to College One's initial history is the University of Iowa's University College, which houses honors programs, bridge initiatives, and general education-focused academic programs (e.g. first-year seminars).

It is notable in several reports that a GE program should engage a broader spectrum of programs and Senate faculty. GE instruction and FTE is a hidden resource without explicit FTE planning, which complicates faculty engagement and sustainability. In the 2011 GE report, the recommendation was to explicitly resource GE responsibilities through 7 FTE. This proposal represented a significant planning effort to include a central Senate faculty administration of GE in College One, which is described as the following:

> At the current stage of campus development, it would be reasonable for this consolidation to occur under the jurisdiction of College One; as we grow, we may want to explore the question of expanding into a college system, with or without corresponding autonomous instructional budgets. Without such a change to separate and protect the funding of general education, we see little hope for developing and sustaining a functional system. A crucial part of any such plan must be the dedication of FTEs specifically for the task of teaching

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responsiveness (3) Community engagement and citizenship -- local and global, (4) Self-awareness and intrapersonal skills, and (5) Interpersonal skills necessary to the outcomes identified above, as well as to lead productive lives after graduation.

[15] In some early plans, Core 1 was to be limited to 5,000 undergraduates, with Core 2 following for the next enrollment phase with an additional 4,000 undergraduates. Given our 2020 trajectory to build the campus population to 9,000 undergraduates, it seems critical to address how Core 1 and other potential iterations will be conceptualized and sustained at our campus. Who is responsible for Core 1's (or a theoretical Core 2's) resources, management and instruction (beyond the Merritt Writing Program). Considerations for additional Core experiences might include an honors track, with more direct contact with research active faculty.

> upper division general education. Depending on what model for delivery is ultimately chosen, this could be stipends for lecturers, or it could take the form of a commitment from each school for an appropriate level of participation by the faculty of that school. (p. 4)

This proposal was not endorsed and resources by our administration at the time. Current planning could include re-consideration this kind of FTE plan, along with increasing attention to an Executive Committee for GE to be parallel to the curriculum processes in the Schools. Even with an Executive Committee and clear FTE resourcing for GE, all Senate faculty could continue to be members of College One and support GE; however, a subset of Senate faculty could have two-year terms to participate in an Executive Council with specific curriculum planning and resourcing responsibilities (see College One: Faculty Bylaws). A governance structure for GE is a critical part of maintaining program development, which would have complementary functions to the current curricular focus of the GE Subcommittee (see committee charges).

Further, as noted in Section II pages 5-6, GE is nearly entirely delivered by Unit 18 lecturers (>92% of the top 23 GE courses). Further review and recommendations about including Unit 18 lecturers more directly in GE programming will be an important priority. Greater involvement from lecturers in the design of GE seems recommendable, especially given high-levels of engagement in the delivery of GE. To create a more inclusive approach, considerations might include planning resources to promote professional development and service (including assessment), increasing opportunity to participate in planning and governance, and prioritizing Senate lecturer appointments in traditionally GE-intensive disciplines and/or interdisciplinary undergraduate programming.

(2.) **Create synergy between major programs and GE**

In general, we have learned that major programs largely deliver GE. The self study identifies (p. 8) uneven alignment between the Eight Guiding Principles, WASC competencies (p. 10), and major program outcomes, which suggests that systematic planning between programmatic and institutional goals is needed. Since the Eight Guiding Principles are likely to evolve, our focus in this part will be on two GE required emphases (quantitative literacy and communication) as a working example of some of the intricacies and questions associated with integrating programmatic and institutional outcomes.

One noted area where our institutional and programmatic expectations might be particularly diffuse is with quantitative reasoning (p. 14). What specifically do we want all UC Merced undergraduates to do/know/appreciate/and understand regarding quantitative literacy, for example? Are these goals shared across the disciplines, and what are the varied contexts to develop this area? A GE program could strengthen shared goals and outcomes across disciplines and potentially bridge gaps in areas of need. GE planning could be keyed towards (1) systematic future assessment of the quantitative GE requirement and WASC competency, in the context of disciplines, (2) enabling such humanities disciplines as Art, History, and English to develop partnerships or quantitatively-focused humanities courses, (3) turning the quantitative GE into something that students and faculty view as part of an overall program. This effort could encourage disciplinary applications, ultimately helping students engage effectively in a data-driven world.

Another area of consensus building is defining and addressing Communication as an institutional priority. Similar to the above quantitative literacy focus, communication is a system-wide required GE emphasis as well as a WASC competency. Our campus has GE writing-intensive requirements, e.g. in

the School of Engineering, but no institutional definition for this term. Similarly, the Guiding Principle of Communication is quite broad and is most commonly selected as a GE outcome of proposed GE courses (see p. 8). Communication and writing was noted as a priority undergraduate consideration by the then Senate Administration Council on Assessment and Planning (now transitioned into the Periodic Review Oversight Committee or PROC). This May 2013 memo noted that based on a two year review of annual reports, more than one-third of undergraduate programs identified writing outcomes as a concern or emphasis (see Appendix #: SACAP May 2013 memo). The Provost endorsed a Writing Task Force, led by VP/Dean Whitt, representing institutional scope of faculty and staff with the following intended outcomes: "a clarification of campus goals for undergraduate writing, recommendations that address the structure and resources necessary to achieve these goals, and a sustainable process by which attention to undergraduate writing can be evaluated and the results used to inform our practices." There are potentially many intersections between this task force and GE program initiatives.

As GE guiding principles and outcomes continue to be clarified, we will need to consider ways to bridge narrow discipline-specific instruction towards an integrative GE experience (p. 9). Further, it has been noted throughout the GE self-study, previous reports and at the retreat that a sustainable approach to GE programming could be through the disciplines. A long standing tradition at other campuses includes co-enrollments and learning communities, which can serve to coordinate disciplinary priorities with interdisciplinary and institutional learning priorities. This kind of approach may be particularly salient given our campus structure, with resource considerations that may include instructional team models and integrative course design.

(3.) **Provide undergraduates with research skills and experiences**

Because of faculty aspirations, campus identity, and small campus environment, UCM students have engaged in significant undergraduate research experiences. A culture of discovery and inquiry, as emphasized as emergent hallmarks of undergraduate education (Appendix O: Retreat Synthesis, p. 2), speaks to how undergraduate research experiences continue to be an ongoing priority and potential area of synergy between disciplines and GE programming.

As our campus grows and graduate programs develop, this legacy of undergraduate research opportunities will continue to need ongoing attention and systematic review. As noted in retreat feedback so far, our GE program could play an important role in:

- Exposure to research methods and authentic problems: Modes of inquiry and approaches to research could be more explicitly featured as aspects of GE. Case studies and research problems could engage students in authentic issues and experiences;
- Distinctive local experiences with community research: Community-based learning could be one model that is inclusive, local, and foundational;
- Access to research-based experiences: Research experiences could be sequenced and inclusive, beginning with exposure to research to applied work.

From more established research universities, we anticipate that maintaining undergraduate research opportunities will be challenging to coordinate and sustain. One consideration could be defining what undergraduate research means to a variety of disciples at our campus to then identify priority skill areas, resource support, and areas of collaboration. Initial work from the recently founded Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center and faculty advisory board will guide and inform GE planning. In sum,

this is an important and emergent emphasis at our campus, with elements that may inform planning around the previous recommendation for synergy between major and GE programs (p. 24).

(4) **Build GE experiences and outcomes from lower to upper division courses**

As noted in the self study, GE courses are proposed in the absence of broader frameworks to inform broadly how our GE program is designed and specifically how outcomes are defined and assessed (7-8). In sum, it is difficult to fulfill this recommendation of building experiences and outcomes between lower and upper division courses without a GE mission, guiding principles, and outcomes. Our first priority, then, is to continue defining these aspects of a GE program, within the context of UCM's hallmarks of an undergraduate education.

A mini self study was conducted with WRI 10 and Core 1 leads (See Appendices # and #) to review institutional-level course data and synthesize annual assessment data. A broader discussion about what defines a "foundational" GE courses and experiences could inform planning. What educational experiences do we continue to privilege, and how do foundational GE courses feature those priorities? How do we know what students are learning, and how does assessment inform GE instructional practice and program design? A need for definitions seems evident: What do we expect students to learn and what are the ways to satisfy these expectations? The lack of definition for quantitative reasoning and writing-intensive experiences (p. 26) are potentially salient UCM examples, in which continued attention to establishing foundational expectations would be fruitful in situating GE outcomes.

Upper division GE coursework is in great need of attention, as noted in previous GE reports focused on addressing our unconstrained menu system and sustainability questions associated with Core 100 (p. 3-5, 9-10). An unconstrained menu system allows random pressures to dictate upper division enrollment in a way that is not intentional, systematic, or desirable. Core 100 illustrates a desire and struggle to define a common intellectual experience at the upper-division level; this issue remains salient in whatever form upper-division GE curricula recommendations might take (e.g. a course requirement, co-enrollments, themes, etc.).

(5) Provide GE programming that connects courses *and* experiences

A comprehensive GE program would include opportunities to integrate courses and activities, culminating in GE experiences that go beyond simply coursework. This recommendation resonates with the 2011 GE report (Appendix Item C), "*If we are committed not just to diversity in access to the university, but also to promoting success for all of our students, we must follow best practices in the curricular and co-curricular aspects of our general education program*" (p. 3). Broadly speaking, scholarship related to the National Survey of Student Engagement data have demonstrated that the importance of high-impact practices, which relate to the design of a GE program. When asked what the one thing could be done to enhance student engagement and increase student success, NSSE founder George Kuh advises "to make it possible for every student to participate in at least two high-impact activities during his or her undergraduate program, one in the first year, and one taken later in relation to the major field. The obvious choices for incoming students are first-year seminars, learning communities, and service learning."[16] Jayne Brownwell and Lynn Swaner in *Five High Impact*

[16] "High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter" 2008.

Practices: Research on Learning Outcomes, Completion and Quality (2010) address how this research applies to specific populations, with attention to the needs of underserved populations. A general pattern supports the idea that high-impact general education practices, such as learning communities and integrated approaches, strengthen this population's student success outcomes[17].

Both of these national studies emphasize that the experience alone is not enough to affect outcomes. In this sense, thoughtful curriculum and program planning, along with assessment of student experiences, are central to the development of high impact practices. *Well designed and deliberate GE programming requires faculty and campus engagement*, particularly in sustaining systematic efforts towards active learning and maintaining associated resources (human and capital). Identifying strategies for Academic and Student Affairs colleagues to collaborate on the planning and delivery of GE programming will be critical to our GE re-design and strategic planning efforts.

Closing

We conclude by seeking guidance relative to our goals to build institutional capacity for GE, re-design GE, and develop a strategic plan. At this stage in our campus history, attention to structure, resources, assessment strategies will be particularly salient.

[17] Student success is defined here as year to year retention, time to degree, and graduation rates.

GENERAL EDUCATION ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

***********DRAFT**************

Review Team

Jillian Kinzie, Indiana University
Terry Rhodes, Association of American Colleges and Universities
Barbara Sawrey, UC San Diego (Review Team Chair)
[TBD, Institution]
Christopher Viney, Vice Chair of Undergraduate Council, GE Liaison
Jane Lawrence, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, GE Liaison

Site Visit Agenda
February 8-11, 2015

*This is subject to change based on availability (only the Provost and the VPDUE times are confirmed)

Sunday, February 8, 2014

6:00 pm	**Welcome Dinner Meeting at (Location TBD): Initial Organization Session** Review Team Members Tom Peterson, Provost/EVC and Co-Chair of the Periodic Review Oversight Committee Cristián Ricci, Senate Vice Chair and Co-Chair of the Periodic Review Oversight Committee Elizabeth Whitt, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education Charles Nies, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Monday, February 9, 2014

8:00-8:30 am	**Initial Organizational Session for Review Team**
8:30-9:30 am	Breakfast Meeting Review Team Members Members of the General Education Subcommittee
9:30-10:30 am	Review Team and Provost/EVC Peterson
10:30-11:30 am	Review Team and VPDUE Whitt

11:30-11:45 am	***BREAK***
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch – Review Team, School Deans (Mark Aldenderfer, Erik Rolland, Juan Meza)
1:00-2:00 pm	Review Team and School Curriculum and Executive Committees Leads
2:00-3:00 pm	Review Team and Unit-18 Lecturers who are involved in teaching GE
3:00-3:45 pm	Review Team and Core 1 Team
3:45-4:00 pm	***BREAK***
4:00-4:45pm	Review Team and Advising Staff

Tuesday, February 10, 2014

8:00-9:00 am	Organizational Session and Breakfast for Review Team
9:00-9:45am	Review Team and Faculty Assessment Organizers
9:45-10:30am	Review Team and Student Affairs, Directors [Elizabeth Boretz (Bright Success Center), Martin Reed (Housing and Residential Life), Brian O'Bruba (Career Development), Vernette Doty (Community Engagement), and Le'Trice Curl (Student Life)]
10:30-11:00am	Review Team: Charles Nies (Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs)
11:00-11:45am	Review Team with VPF Camfield (I will confirm with his assistant)
11:45-1:00 pm	Lunch – Review Team (Organizational Session)
1:00-1:45pm	Open Forum for Undergraduates
2:00-2:45pm	Open Forum for Unit 18 Lecturers
3:00-3:45pm	Review Team and GE Participants
4-4:45pm	Open Forum for Senate Faculty

Wednesday, February 11, 2014

8:00-8:30am	Organizational Session and Breakfast for Review Team
8:30-9:30am	Review Team and Provost/EVC Peterson
9:30-10:30am	Review Team and UGC
10:30-11:30am	Exit Interview Review Team Members Tom Peterson, Provost/EVC

Elizabeth Whitt, VPDUE
GE Subcommittee

- The self-study lays out the fact that most of GE is delivered in the schools so a session with the School Curriculum Committees and Executive Committees will be added
- Add session for Core 1 team
- Add session for Provost the morning of Monday, Feb 9
- Add session for VPF to provide faculty perspective on the role of GE