

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building  
601 East John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820



September 21, 2016

**2016-2017 General Education Board**

Craig Zilles, *Chair*  
Antony Augoustakis  
Karen Carney  
Kate Clancy  
Susan Curtis  
Lee DeVille  
George Gollin  
David Hays  
Chris Higgins  
Harrison Kim

Soo Lee  
Jonathan Keeble  
Julian Parrott  
Stephen Peters  
Rebecca Sandefur  
Meagan Schaffer, *undergraduate student*  
James Swigart, *graduate student*  
Casey Waler, *undergraduate student*  
Jon Welty-Peachey  
Kathy Martensen, *ex-officio*

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your willingness to serve, or to continue to serve, on the General Education Board in 2016-2017. I am pleased that Craig Zilles has agreed to provide leadership for the Board. I welcome Kate Clancy, Lee DeVille, Chris Higgins, Harrison Kim, Rebecca Sandefur, Meagan Schaffer, James Swigart, and Casey Walker to the Board and thank outgoing members Rob Rushing, Tom Anastasio, Farah Chalisa, Eleanor Courtemanche, Erin Johnson, Erhan Kudeki, Matt Gilbert, Sarah McCarthey, Cele Otnes, Hal Schenck, and Collin Schumock for their contributions.

In May 1989, the Urbana Senate established the General Education Board to “ensure, as much as possible, that general education courses will be valuable intellectual experiences.” Since then, the Board has been responsible for defining the categories of general education requirements for the campus, as well as the criteria for approval of courses within these categories. The Board also reviews individual course proposals, and on a staggered schedule, reviews and recertifies all courses approved for general education credit.

Three years ago, the Board undertook the task of evaluating and updating the process for recertification of the courses currently approved for General Education credit. Among the changes, the Board opted to move to a ten-year cycle and spent considerable time reviewing the materials associated with the review. These changes are now in place, and the recertification process resumed last year and will continue this year.

The Board will continue to review proposals for courses new to General Education. In the interest of efficiency, I ask the Board to continue to take action on these requests in the course of the monthly meetings. Materials received in our office will be made available prior to meetings to allow for informed discussion.

Over the last few years the Board demonstrated its support for innovation by allowing for provisional certification of experimental courses, including pilot courses for the Grand Challenge Learning (GCL) initiative. I thank you for your willingness to help GCL and other experiments move forward in a timely manner. Though I expect you will see far fewer GCL reviews this year than last, I appreciate your engagement with colleagues who are developing these courses, and your efforts to help them shape courses that are consistent with campus standards for General Education.

I anticipate a significant amount of the Board's work this year will revolve around the new Cultural Studies requirement that affects students starting in Fall 2018 and later. Action by the Senate in May, 2016 amended EP.89.09 to require three Cultural Studies courses, one concentrating on Western culture, one on non-Western culture, and one on U.S. minority culture. The Senate then specifically charged the GEB to<sup>1</sup>:

1. ...review criteria for approval of courses in all Cultural Studies categories and for courses to be approved in multiple General Education categories, and to submit proposed changes to the Senate Educational Policy Committee on or before December 31, 2016. The Board's proposed criteria shall ensure that courses approved for the U.S. minority culture category appropriately and substantially address the experiences, conditions, and perspectives of U.S. racial minority populations, and that courses focusing on other socially significant identities (for example, sexuality, gender, religion, and disability) or broadly on diversity are appropriate for this requirement as long as the experiences of U.S. racial minorities are significant to these courses.
2. ...review disparities between EP.89.09 as amended here and GB.91.02 on one hand, and the campus implementation of General Education as amended here on the other hand, and recommend further amendments or revisions to those documents to the Senate Educational Policy Committee on or before March 1, 2017.

The responsibility for these tasks resides solely with the General Education Board, and I hope you will undertake them thoughtfully and complete them in a timely way.

For your information, a separate task force will be convened to guide administrative preparation for the new Cultural Studies requirement. That group will project seats needed, work with colleges and departments to ensure that adequate seats are available, consider TA and instructor training programs, work with degree audit systems, and ensure that academic advisors are equipped to help students with the new requirements. The GEB retains its responsibility and sole authority to certify courses for general education requirements, including courses in the U.S. minority cultures category. You may see some increased activity in course reviews for the U.S. minority cultures category this year and next.

Again, thank you for your willingness to serve on the General Education Board. The Board plays a crucial role in maintaining a high-quality undergraduate experience at Illinois, and I appreciate the time and effort you devote to that.

Sincerely,



Charles L. Tucker III  
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation

c: Tom Anastasio  
Eleanor Courtemanche  
Erhan Kudeki  
Matt Gilbert  
Sarah McCarthy  
Cele Otnes  
Rob Rushing  
Hal Schenck

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.senate.illinois.edu/ep/Props/1516/Final/ep1680.final.pdf>