September 17, 2018   REVISED*

2018-2019 General Education Board

Jon Welty-Peachey, AHS, Chair
Aimee Barbeau, BUS
Marsha Barrett, LAS
Adrian Burgos, LAS
Liv Solveig Thorstensson Davila, EDU*
Lee DeVille, LAS
Harrison Kim, ENG
Brenda Lindsey, SOCW
Gary Ochs, ACES
Sterling Raskie, BUS
Kelly Ritter, LAS
Rebecca Sandefur, LAS
Sela Sar, MEDIA
Dan Shike, ACES
Chadly Stern, LAS
Bridget Sweet, FAA
John Toenjes, FAA
Dallas Trinkle, ENG
Smitha Vishveshwara, ENG
TBD, undergraduate student
TBD, graduate student
TBD, undergraduate student
Kathy Martensen, ex-officio

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your willingness to serve, or to continue to serve, on the General Education Board in 2018-2019. I am pleased that Jon Welty-Peachey has agreed to provide leadership for the Board. I welcome Aimee Barbeau, Marsha Barrett, Gary Ochs, Sterling Raskie, Chadly Stern, Bridget Sweet, John Toenjes, Dallas Trinkle and Smitha Vishveshwara to the Board and thank outgoing members Antony Augoustakis, Susan Curtis, Matt Gilbert, George Gollin, Chris Higgins, Jonathan Keeble, Stephen Peters, Linda Robbenolt, John Senseney, James Swigart, Casey Walker, and Ryan Yapp 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.

The Board will continue to review proposals for courses new to General Education and those due for recertification. 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 two years, a significant amount of the Board’s work revolved around the new Cultural Studies requirement that affects students starting in Fall, 2018. The 2016-2017 Board successfully developed the Cultural Studies criteria, which have been applied to review of courses applying for general education certification in these categories and reconciled EP.89.09
as amended in EP.16.80 and GB.91.02 with campus practice. The 2017-2018 Board applied these updated criteria in a review of U.S. Minority Cultures course applications, both that are submitted anew and those that were previously certified in this category. The Board obtained clarification on application of the criteria, which should serve to facilitate the review of U.S. Minority Cultures courses going forward. Previously-certified courses in which the Board determined a lack of alignment with the revised criteria were given this academic year as a “grace period,” after which the U.S. Minority Cultures certification will be removed if the course is not revised and submitted to the Board for reconsideration. Those units that wish to have these courses reconsidered were asked to provide revised submissions by mid-September. Your consideration of any such revised submissions using the revised criteria with clarification obtained last spring is appreciated. You can also expect higher-than-normal activity in course reviews for the U.S. Minority Cultures category again this year.

For your information, two implementation task groups continue to meet to guide administration of the new Cultural Studies requirement. Those groups 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. A third group is developing a plan to assess the impact of the new requirement on student learning and campus climate. The GEB retains its responsibility and sole authority to certify courses for general education requirements, including courses in the U.S. minority cultures category.

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

Sincerely,

Kevin Pitts
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

c:  A Augoustakis
    S. Curtis
    M. Gilbert
    G. Gollin
    C. Higgins
    J. Keeble
    S. Peters
    L. Robbennolt
    J. Senseney
    J. Swigart
    C. Walker
    R. Yapp