

Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2025

Voting Members Present: John Leafgren, Karin Nolan, Ally Roof, Christopher Sanderson, Amanda Sokan, Travis Spence, Joost Van Haren, Jeremy Vetter

Non-voting Members Present: Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Cassidy Salazar, Abbie Sorg, Alex Underwood

UGC Chair Joost Van Haren called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. A quorum was established with 8 voting members.

I. Approval of Curriculum & Policies Subcommittee meeting minutes, 4/1/2025

Christopher Sanderson motioned to accept the meeting minutes from 4/1/2025. John Leafgren seconded the motion. The motion passed with 8 votes in favor.

II. Discussion Items

A. Changes to General Education policies proposal

Presenters: Joost Van Haren, Jeremy Vetter

The subcommittee was briefed on minor changes made to the General Education policy proposal packet that the subcommittee approved by e-vote earlier in the month. At the request of UWGEC and some members of the Faculty Senate, language had been added to codify the units responsible for approving new general education courses: the Office of General Education and UWGEC. A link was also added to direct to the Office of General Education website; this was important as some GE informational policies would be relocated to the OGE site from the catalog. The added language is true to existing practices.

There was no objection from the subcommittee regarding the language added to the policy proposal.

B. Second Language Requirements for Undergraduate Degrees and Supporting Policies

Presenter: Joost Van Haren, Jeremy Vetter

The subcommittee was informed of the concerns UWGEC had with the policy proposal:

- The most contested aspect of the proposal was high school coursework counting toward college credit without a proficiency exam. Currently, only the College of Engineering allows this at their discretion. UWGEC agreed that requirements should be consistent across campus, so students wouldn't see their requirements change when they declared a new major.

- There was concern that if students could waive a language requirement through high school coursework without needing to take a proficiency test, this sort of change could also happen to math and/or writing in the future.
- Some members felt that requiring 3 years of a high school second language to waive the general education requirement would be more appropriate, since 2 years is the admission requirement. This extra year could help to account for varying quality/depth of high school learning.
- UWGEC agreed it would be necessary to separate out the general education and Bachelor of Arts language requirement. Otherwise, there would be a risk of students' GE coursework being uncompleted when they transfer into a BA program.
- One member referenced evidence that students who took a language (instead of testing out of a language) had a stronger record of completion and persistence.

Discussion continued:

- If the policy was approved as-is, would students waiving the general education requirement with high school coursework be permitted to continue on in the language?
 - In order to continue on, the student would need to test into the appropriate course level through a proficiency exam.
- What is the argument against requiring proficiency testing for students with high school second language coursework?
 - The concern is to not add an extra layer of requirement for students who otherwise wouldn't have needed the requirements previously. College of Engineering students have satisfied the requirement through high school coursework (without a proficiency exam) for many years. Multiple other colleges have requested this same consideration. In order to account for the practices that already exist, the taskforce suggested that additional testing not be required. Whatever the policy ends up being, it will be the same for all colleges. Not requiring the test results in fewer changes for the College of Engineering.
- Two members with previous experience as teachers relayed that there is a lot of autonomy for teachers to develop their own curriculum, resulting in varying educational experiences. Despite not wanting another barrier for students, there wasn't a way to vouch for the quality of a student's high school education. Diverse educational experiences may add further inconsistency: homeschool, parochial school, private or public school, and domestic or international school, etc.
 - Other members agreed there would be too much variability in proficiency.
 - It was clarified that students would not receive college credit for the high school coursework, but would be exempted from the requirement.

- For programs like Engineering with tight unit requirements to degree completion, requiring the proficiency exam could cause issues. Not all students will pass the proficiency exam, meaning they will need to fit the second language coursework into their curriculum. While the decision for the entire University should not be made based on a single college, Engineering should still be considered.
- Several other benchmarked institutions allow high school coursework to waive the language requirement without an exam. If the University also allowed this, it could help in competing with other institutions.
- Would homeschooled students be able to waive the requirement with previous coursework as well?
 - Homeschooled students must meet the threshold for admissibility; admissions reviews distribution requirements, and this would still be done to mark whether the student needed to take the exam or not.
 - The number of homeschooled students have increased in Arizona in recent years due to vouchers that allow parents to use state funding toward a dependent's education outside of traditional schooling.
- The difficulty in updating this policy was balancing the interests of a broad and intense research university with 300+ programs. This is why the taskforce was created to offer some guidance.
- Some institutions require 2 years of a second language, and a few require 4. Requiring 3 could be a good middle ground, and above the admissions requirement.
- Most students complete 2 years of a second language in high school for college admissions requirements. Those who complete 3 years are more likely to do well in the language, and it would be less concerning not to require a proficiency exam if the institution was requiring 3 years.
 - Depending on where the school is, these 3 years may look different. One member noted that a school in Pima County counted 8th grade second language coursework as a year of high school coursework.
- The College of Management had also felt very strongly about allowing high school second language coursework to count towards general education.
- Advising's main concern was that the new policy be communicated effectively to students. For a student that waives the GE requirement with 2 years of high school coursework, but then pursues a BA, it could be confusing for them to have to take an exam and place into 101 or 102.
 - It was important to make the BA requirement a university-level requirement outside of general education. Allowing BA students to pursue a different language from their general education language would allow students to explore a much wider range of options than were likely available in high school.
 - It would need to be clear to students if a placement exam was required to move on in language. Allowing students to pivot to a different second

language would add more nuance. This could be helpful for students that switched from a BS to a BA program.

- The less-contested areas of the proposal were mentioned:
 - Right now, there is a temporary discrepancy in policy that results in transfer students with AGECE or IGETCE being exempted from taking the 2 additional semesters for BA programs, because the BA requirement is currently part of GE. Students who started as first-year students at the University are still required to take 4th semester proficiency. Separating out the GE and BA policies will mean equal requirements for all students, regardless of being a first-year or transfer student.
 - Additional pathways for completing the requirement would be added and/or clarified, including the seal of biliteracy, study abroad and multilingual learning experiences, and having more curricular choices (second-semester proficiency of 2 languages as an option beyond 4th semester proficiency of one language).
- Another consideration for whether the proficiency exam be required was non-traditionally aged students who had completed high school several years ago. Were the benefits of cultural competency that they had learned still applicable, even though they'd likely forgotten the language?
- The proposed policy stated, "All degree-seeking students are required to demonstrate second semester competency." If no exam were required, would students still be demonstrating competency? Should that language be adjusted?
 - Based on the subsequent language in the proposal, the high school credit would be a way to prove competency. Because exemptions would be granted instead of credit, it would be easier to translate test credit and experience.
- The taskforce had decided that high school coursework would not apply to the BA requirement.
- The colleges that have asked for exceptions were Nursing, Eller, and CAST.
- The Substitutions for Approved General Education Courses policy had also generated a lot of discussion at UWGEC. Members had heard concerns from their departmental advising offices about who would be deciding whether coursework could be substituted, since the policy update would transfer this decision from individual colleges and their advisors to Undergraduate Education.
 - Advising is currently gathering data on course substitutions granted in recent years.
- Some concerns about the Substitutions policy were actually about the Transfer Credit policy, but the overlap of the two policies created confusion. If this policy only referred to internal substitution, it would reduce the scope (and likely, the concern).
- By making course substitution a central decision, it could increase the time it took for students to hear a decision regarding which credits counted. It could

also interfere with the way decisions had been made in the past, which have helped students progress in their degrees.

- On the other hand, these decisions should not be made inconsistently across different parts of campus, especially when a student switches from one program to another. Having a central decision-maker would prevent a program from 'unsatisfying' a student's coursework that was already approved while the student was in another program.
- Shouldn't all substitutions be funneled to the same office? Why would advisors still make decisions regarding coursework substituted for DRC accommodations?
 - Typically, DRC accommodations mean that a student needs to select a different course in the same type of area. Their advisor would be the best situated to advise on a specific course in that area. Substitutions for something broader like an EP/BC course would be considered by the division of Undergraduate Education.
 - Sometimes courses selected for DRC accommodation aren't offered, or are offered at a time that conflicts with the student's schedule. Advisors stayed involved in the process to make sure students end up with a suitable course that progresses the student toward graduation.
- The only substantive changes in the proposal from the current policy were the responsible unit being updated to undergraduate education from the individual colleges, and removing the provision that a student's new major could deny previously-approved GE substitutions. Because colleges would need to honor previous substitutions, it seemed beneficial to move the decision-making unit to a more neutral space.
- Further discussion would be needed in how transfer credit was managed, and the difference between substitution and the more granular degree audit that advisors are responsible for.
- Why would this decision go to the Division of Undergraduate Education rather than the Office of General Education?
 - Undergraduate Education is structurally new, and it includes both the Office of General Education and Central Advising.
- The biggest concern from Advising was understanding the process. Though the policy didn't necessarily address the process, it was still important to discuss. The University has had advisors making these substitutions for a long time, but typically at other institutions, substitutions are made from a central space. If a request comes in that is not on the list, they would speak with the chair or committee of a body equivalent to UWGEC to make sure everyone reaches an agreement.
- One change that would curtail some substitution is coding the transfer courses for General Education.

The subcommittee will review the policy again in the fall once UWGEC has made a recommendation.

C. 2024-2025 Policy Accomplishments

Presenter: Abbie Sorg

The subcommittee was given an overview of policy updates implemented over the past academic year, as well as updates still in progress.

- Six transfer credit policies were consolidated into a single policy. The 64-unit limit on transfer credits from Community Colleges was removed.
- Bachelor's Degree Requirements and Major Declaration were updated to condense all information on second majors/degrees in one location. Second majors, concurrent degrees, and sequential degrees were given more similar requirements, so students would be able to select a route based on what makes sense for their education (instead of what they could afford to do logistically).
- The General Education packet (including updates to the GE attributes and Writing and Math foundations) and Repeating a Course and Grading for Repeated Courses policies would be reviewed by Faculty Senate on May 5.
 - One representative from the General Petitions committee felt both these policies would be very impactful and helpful to students once approved.
- The Course Types policy was still undergoing review by the professional colleges, but was expected to resume routing through faculty governance in the fall.
- The General Education packet 2, on second language requirements, would continue review at UWGEC and the subcommittee in the fall.

Two policy proposals approved by the subcommittee will be reviewed by the Faculty Senate on May 5, 2025. Proposals in progress will resume review in fall 2025.

D. 2025-2026 Policy Roadmap

Presenter: Alex Underwood

The subcommittee reviewed a comprehensive list of policies up for review. While it wouldn't be possible to review all policies in 2025-2026, any remaining policies would be reviewed in subsequent years.

- The list was divided into graduate, undergraduate, and university-wide. University-wide policies would route to faculty governance at the graduate and undergraduate level, while other policies would only be reviewed by committees/councils for the respective career level.

Discussion continued:

- Given recent and future updates to general education curriculum, should some courses currently reviewed by UWGEC should be reviewed by another

committee instead? These courses might include BA-level language requirements, success courses, and upper-division Writing Emphasis courses.

- Since Accelerated Master's Programs impact undergraduate education, should that policy be reviewed at the undergraduate level as well? On the roadmap, it was a graduate policy.
 - It would make sense for both undergraduate and graduate to review the proposal, but as it is ultimately about a master's degree, the graduate council should give more direction on where the policy ultimately lands. A comparable example would be Graduate Credit for Seniors, which concerns graduate coursework, but is an undergraduate policy.

Policy review will resume at the first subcommittee meeting in fall 2025.

The meeting was officially adjourned at 4:59 PM. The next subcommittee meeting will be held in fall 2025.

Respectfully submitted by Cassidy Salazar, 5/9/2025