

Curriculum and Policies Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2025

Voting Members Present: Elizabeth Ghartey, Michelle Halla, John Leafgren, Ally Roof, Dereka Rushbrook, Christopher Sanderson, Amanda Soka, Jeremy Vetter, Eddy White

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

Chair Ally Roof called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. A quorum was established with 9 voting members.

I. Discussion Items

A. General Education: Second Language Requirements

Presenters: Ally Roof, Alex Underwood

The subcommittee was briefed on changes to General Education policies that been approved in spring 2025, including changes to the math and writing requirement, and the removal of attributes as graduation requirements. As a continuation of these changes, the second language policy proposal still needed review and approval in order to implement any changes in Fall 2026 alongside the other approved updates.

The guiding principles of the proposed changes were to make general education requirements uniform for all students, prevent a student that changed majors from “uncompleting” previously completed requirements, and to simplify the requirements to be better understood by students. Because it would take time to implement the changes in requirements for fall 2026, it was urgent that these policies finished review by the end of fall 2025.

Since 1998, the College of Engineering has had an exception to the general education second language requirement (the requirement could be deemed satisfied “by a method determined within the college”). This created a rift with other colleges; some colleges had wanted the same exception granted, and others felt that no colleges should be exempt. A second language taskforce met throughout the 2024-2025 academic year to review the purpose of the second language requirement and reconcile individual colleges’ demands with the current policy. An executive summary of the taskforce recommendation was shared with the subcommittee.

In spring 2025, UWGEC approved aspects of the proposal, but not the provision that two years of high school would satisfy the requirement without a proficiency test. This fall, after reviewing the updated proposal with three options, UWGEC cast an updated, non-binding vote to approve option 1 (the taskforce recommendation) with the amendment that three years of high school coursework be required to satisfy the general education second language requirement without a proficiency exam. The other two proposal options were not supported by UWGEC.

Option 1 of the proposal document was the taskforce recommendation. It required second semester language proficiency for any degree type, and introduced some new pathways to reach proficiency, including through high school coursework. The proposal included a separate policy for Bachelor of Arts degrees that required 4th semester proficiency (or 2nd semester proficiency of two different languages).

A completed AGECEC (Arizona General Education Curriculum) was accepted in its entirety rather than checking for course-by-course equivalency. AGECEC did not include second language as a core requirement, but transfer students with a completed AGECEC had nonetheless satisfied the second language requirement. Under the existing policies, there were transfer students earning BA degrees that didn't have any documented second language competency because of their completed AGECEC. By separating the Bachelor of Arts language requirement as its own policy, these students would be required to complete two semesters of a second language after having satisfied the general education requirement via AGECEC. This would better standardize the requirements for first-year and transfer students alike.

The current admissions requirement for the University included two years of a second language. If Option 1 was approved, the vast majority of students admitted would have already satisfied the general education second language requirement. UWGEC wanted to distinguish the general education requirement from the admissions requirement by requiring a minimum of three years to meet proficiency. Students with two years could still satisfy the requirement by passing a proficiency exam.

Option 2 proposed the removal of the general education second language requirement altogether, while still creating a Bachelor of Arts second language requirement.

Option 3 retained the general education and Bachelor of Arts second language requirements and built more colleges into the exception that the College of Engineering has had since 1998. This option seemed less widely supported, given the difficulty of enforcing a policy with exceptions written in. The policy would likely need regular revision as additional colleges went on to request exception.

Option 3 did not meet the overarching goal of the general education reform, because language requirements would differ amongst colleges. However, it would make the existing exception more transparent. The current policy only stated that proficiency was determined by a method of the college's choosing; this proposal would provide a codified way that colleges could have the exception.

Discussion began:

- Multiple members shared UWGEC's interest in using Option 1 from the proposal with the caveat that three years of high school second language be required to satisfy the general education requirement.
- What would happen to the College of Engineering's exception if Option 1 was approved?

- Engineering students had been satisfying the general education second language requirement by using two years of high school coursework. Under this proposal, their exception would be built in and apply to all colleges.
- Some local school districts allowed middle school coursework to count as high school coursework; a student could complete three years of a second language as early as their freshman year of high school.
- How did three years of high school second language guarantee proficiency? 3-4 years of language study in one high school might look very different from that of another high school. Additionally, separate languages at the same institution might provide varying levels of competency in the same time span.
 - While UWGEC's official stance was still to remove the provision that high school coursework alone could satisfy the requirement, allowing three years to satisfy the requirement was meant to be a compromise. Requiring three years of a second language would not guarantee proficiency, but it was more likely that students with an extra year of high school language would be able to pass a proficiency exam and gain additional cultural competency than students with two years of high school second language.
- If cultural competency was the goal, and not language proficiency, why did the policy proposal distinguish between which study abroad options satisfied the requirement?
 - The current policy around using study abroad to satisfy language proficiency left the decision in the hands of the language department for the language spoken by the particular study abroad experience. This should be avoided in a policy update, so that students wouldn't have to appeal to individual language departments for approval.
 - The General Education Implementation Advisory Taskforce would be looking into a rubric for determining which study abroad programs should satisfy the requirement. Consideration would likely be given to use of language, length of the study abroad, and reflection when considering the experience holistically. Multilingual learning experiences, such as ITEP (Indigenous Teacher Education Program), would also be reviewed.
 - There would be a committee specifically designated to make the determination for study abroad programs and multilingual learning experiences, possibly as a subcommittee of UWGEC, that would include faculty and those with study abroad expertise. Programs would need to submit proposals for consideration asking that their study abroad offerings satisfy the general education and/or the BA-level requirement.
- Why was fourth-semester proficiency being considered for the Bachelor of Arts in particular when there were over 30 degree types at the university? The current policy already had this requirement for the Bachelor of Arts degree, but shouldn't other degree types be re-evaluated/considered?

- Based on the benchmarking, it was typical to have this requirement for BA degrees specifically.
- According to the benchmarking, the University was in the minority of surveyed institutions by not allowing high school coursework to satisfy the language requirement. Both Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University allowed for this.
- Allowing students to meet the BA requirement through second-semester proficiency of two different languages would be a positive change.
- How complex would it be to require three years of high school to satisfy the general education requirement (instead of two years)?
 - The implementation itself would be straightforward. However, it was difficult to estimate how many students would be impacted, because the existing admissions process only identified when students were deficient in second language – not when they exceeded the two-year requirement.
 - There would be students in colleges that had requested not to have language in their program of study that would need to take language.
 - Students would still be able to take the proficiency exam with 2 years of high school coursework, but they couldn't satisfy the requirement automatically. There were also other pathways for satisfying the requirement specified in the proposal, such as the seal of biliteracy, study abroad/multilingual learning experiences, and university coursework.

Christopher Sanderson moved to deny all three proposal options altogether, and John Leafgren seconded the motion. The subcommittee voted unanimously to deny all three proposal options with 9 votes.

Christopher Sanderson motioned to approve option 1 with the amendment that a minimum of three years of coursework taken in a second language at the high school level would be considered the equivalent of second-semester competency at the post-secondary level. Elizabeth Gharthey seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously with 9 votes in favor. A revision may be brought back to the subcommittee in the future, given the strong requests from multiple academic units and colleges to not have students take second language as part of their curriculum.

B. General Education: Civic Institutions & Supporting Policies

Presenters: Ally Roof, Jeremy Vetter

Civic Institutions: Implementation of Civic Institutions was urgent because it was required for ABOR compliance. UWGEC had not yet voted on the proposal, due to time spent reviewing the second language policy proposals, but was expected to soon.

An advisory group of faculty, advisors, and staff met through spring 2025 to establish a new general education model that included Civic Institutions. Multiple models were considered, and the current proposal was a combination of the two most widely-

supported models: one of the three BC (Building Connections) courses would be replaced with a Civic Institutions course.

One less-supported model was to create a Civic Institutions course that doubled as a BC course, so that one of the three BC courses wouldn't need to be removed. However, there was concern about fitting all of the content into a single course. Another consideration was to replace 2/3 BC courses with Civic Institutions courses, but some members of the advisory group felt that this would be too big of a change and were concerned about the capacity to offer seats for two required Civic Institutions courses compared to one. Both Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University only offered a single American Institutions course (though ASU had also established a corollary course).

At some point in the future, a depth attribute would be created for Civic Inquiry, to be assigned to EP/BC courses that only addressed 1/7 of the areas identified by ABOR.

Attributes: In spring 2025, the provision was removed from the Curriculum and Attributes policies that would have made attributes graduation requirements be tracked beginning Fall 2026. It had been determined that most students were encountering the attributes naturally during their curriculum. This update removed the burden for advising to have to track whether students were meeting all attributes.

As a further update to this policy, the current proposal removed the names and descriptions of attributes from the Attributes policy and would relocate that information to the Office of General Education website. As this information was more of a convention than a policy, it did not need to be student-facing. As a result, when ABOR made updates to attribute descriptions in the future, the institution would be able to nimbly update the information without sending it through shared governance. The policy would still specify that courses had to have attributes, but would no longer specify which attributes.

Course Substitutions: Lastly, the course substitutions policy had generated a lot of discussion amongst advising. The proposed updates would transfer the locus of who determined course substitutions to the Office of General Education. This would include rare cases where a University of Arizona non-general education course was substituted for a General Education course. The proposal would not impact general transfer courses, which would still be handled by advising.

Due to time constraints, there was no time for discussion. The subcommittee was encouraged to review the materials for discussion at the October subcommittee meeting.

The meeting was officially adjourned at 4:57 PM. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on October 7, 2025.

Respectfully submitted by Cassidy Salazar, 9/26/2025