

ELLER REQUEST FOR EXCEPTION TO THE SECOND LANGUAGE POLICY

Voting history

- UGC Curriculum & Policies subcommittee: voted to reject the proposal (8-0)
- UWGEC: voted to reject the proposal (12-5; 2 abstentions)

Shared Governance Discussion Summaries

11/04/25 – UGC Curriculum & Policy Subcommittee

Dean Karthik Kannan from Eller joined the Undergraduate Council Curriculum & Policies subcommittee meeting to explain the reasoning behind his college's request for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) Degree to be extended the "Engineering exception" to the Foundations Second Language requirement.

Primary reasons for Eller request:

- To remain competitive with other institutions:
 - 52% of peer institutions had no 2nd language requirement
 - 17% had only requirements for specialized programs (e.g., international business)
- To better prepare students
 - Companies are expecting business graduates to be familiar with AI, but there is no room in the curriculum to add courses on AI
 - BSBA students currently have room for 6-9 credits of electives
 - The exception would free up 8 additional units in the curriculum for new courses and other electives
- If the exception is not granted by end of November 2025, changes to curriculum must be delayed until Fall 2027

Key discussion points for the UGC C&P subcommittee:

- Second language acquisition makes students better communicators and more sensitive to other cultures, and the committee feels strongly that UofA should not follow suit with other universities by eliminating this requirement. Furthermore, the committee rejects the sentiment that high school students choose which university to attend based on second language requirement.
- A primary goal of updating GE policies is to give students consistent and streamlined experiences regardless of program. The Eller exception moves us away from this goal and puts students at risk of "uncompleting" Gen Eds if they switch out of the BSBA program.

- If a program feels additional elective courses are necessary in the curriculum, the committee agreed that this should be carved out of program requirements rather than GE requirements.
 - The Engineering exception, if requested today, would not be supported by UWGEC nor UGC.
- The committee suggested that Eller consider creating more GE courses that could also apply to a student's major under the Multiple Use of Courses policy. This would free up space in the curriculum. Dean Kannan noted that this option had not been considered.

The UGC Curriculum & Policies subcommittee voted unanimously to reject Eller's request for an exception to the second language policy.

10/29/25 – UWGEC

UWGEC recently discussed Eller College of Management's proposal that students in their Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Degree be extended the "Engineering exception" to the Foundations Second Language requirement.

The memo accompanying the request cited the need for additional coursework in the major, including courses on Artificial Intelligence, Advanced Data analytics, and Digital Transformations strategies in support of student's career trajectories, pointing out that a significant portion of comparable institutions do not have such a requirement (while also that many do in fact have such a requirement). The memo concludes with the argument that "Rather than maintaining a traditional requirement that provides limited career value for most business students, we can offer specialized technical education that directly enhances our graduates' employability and professional advancement opportunities."

While UWGEC admires and supports Eller's efforts to ensure that their graduates can be successful in the careers they may choose to pursue after graduation, ultimately UWGEC voted against this requested change to policy for a few reasons:

- 1.) **UWGEC is considering a broader policy and would prefer to create a consistent, coherent policy rather than an *ad hoc* and changing list of exceptions.** Following up on the recommendations of the Second Language Task Force convened in the 2024–2025 Academic Year, and proposals from the Office of the Provost in conjunction with the Registrar, UWGEC has debated and approved updated policies, including changes to the Foundations: Second Language category. These

changes would open still more pathways to satisfaction of the requirement outside of language courses (on top of the many pathways already accepted).

UWGEC has explicitly rejected in multiple discussions and at least one formal vote, the extension of the practice of satisfying our Foundations requirement by assuming (in the absence of evidence) that two years of high school course work achieves the same learning as two semesters of university, i.e. the method chosen by the College of Engineering, which Eller seeks to adopt for the BSBA. Experts in the teaching of language and culture have pointed out that this method is unlikely to be a reliable measure of assessing the learning or experiences of students given the diversity of high school experiences and the shortage of qualified teachers in many high school language programs, and object to its current use in the College of Engineering. UWGEC looks forward to faculty governance and administration aligning on and approving a clear and consistent policy that supports the place of language work in the general education curriculum and as a university-level requirement (not just an admissions requirement), but does not wish to pass *ad hoc* exceptions, a practice which the administration specifically highlighted as undesirable, confusing, and contrary to the best practice of having a single Gen Ed policy for all students.

It is true that our current policy does not achieve that goal, and the “Engineering exception” does violate that principle. We recognize that this long-standing exception was driven by similar needs (the desire for a major to prepare students for a specialized career with specific accrediting requirements), but many on UWGEC are ultimately unsatisfied with the strategy employed by the College of Engineering which seems to not take seriously the role of language proficiency in the General Education program. That is, were the “Engineering Exception” put in front of UWGEC today, it is not clear that policy would pass this committee’s vote.

Our goal is not to hold students in the Eller College of Management to a different standard than students in the College of Engineering, or to treat the colleges themselves unequally, but rather to ensure that students in both (and indeed, all) colleges have a consistent program and rationale. We ask for your patience while we move forward to that goal on a broad policy level.

2.) UWGEC affirms the notion that a University of Arizona education is more than just career training. While we recognize that students in the BSBA program have a lot to learn both to be prepared for their careers and to meet requirements of

accrediting bodies, the University of Arizona has repeatedly affirmed the value of a broad general education curriculum which serves every student by “supporting the development of the habits of mind that define an educated person.” ([ABOR policy manual 2-210](#), A.4) Both UWGEC and the Provost’s Second Language Task Force repeatedly affirm the place of Second Language courses and skills in the training of those habits of mind.

UWGEC also notes that such courses and skills support the overall [Student Learning Outcomes for General Education](#) at the University of Arizona, including all four major elements: the ability to Think Critically, Communicate Effectively, to Understand and Value Differences, and to Use Information Effectively and Ethically. Language courses and training are an integral piece of these aims, as well as the charge from ABOR that students “receive exposure multiple times” and that pieces of material “build upon each other in an integrative manner.” ([ABOR policy manual 2-210](#), A.1). That is, Foundations Language courses (and/or the other ways students can establish their proficiency in second language) align with and support other efforts. Language training serves alongside courses with the World Cultures and Societies attribute to help students “Understand and Value Differences.” Language experience serves alongside courses with the writing attribute and foundations writing courses to help students “Communicate Effectively.” Second Language learning promotes critical thinking and information literacy alongside efforts in those areas as well.

While this is not the venue to defend every piece of the General Education curriculum, it is important to note that it has been designed and approved as a curriculum that works with all its parts to ensure that all our students, whatever their careers turn out to be (or not to be), walk away with a solidly broad university education that will be applicable to their future lives as humans and citizens as well as workers. In the light of a competitive world in which both programs and universities compete for students and funding, it is part of UWGEC’s role to protect the quality and breadth of students’ general education, even as colleges and departments work to protect the quality and depth of students’ education in their major and minor field(s). In programs where students’ major coursework occupies so many of their 120 university units, it becomes more (not less) important that the students have an opportunity to robustly satisfy all components of general education work in their required courses.

It should be noted that there are many pathways to satisfaction of the Second Language requirement, many of which require fewer than 8 units and in some cases as few as 0 units. Unless or until the requirement is substantively changed, we would encourage Eller advisors and faculty to consider advising students to take advantage of previous language training by having students whenever possible proceed into second-semester courses in their first semester (when recall of previously studied material is highest), to take advantage of the university administered proficiency exams, and/or other methods of satisfaction. The language requirement is the only foundations requirement that can be satisfied with no coursework. It should also be noted that other units on campus have been exploring the development of specific language offerings that serve the needs of students in their colleges, and that departments that teach language are generally very open to these kinds of collaborations that might allow Eller students to satisfy the second language requirement and learn major-specific content or skills in the same course(s).