

Meeting Minutes: Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Date: October 21, 2025

Format: Hybrid (In-person and Virtual)

Attending: Ryan Winet; Nicole Gonzalez; Stephanie Capaldi; John Leafgren; Michelle Halla; Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski; Eddy White; Allison Lee; Christopher Domin; Dereka Rushbrook; Elizabeth Gharthey; Claire McLane; Esteban Hernandez Parra; Allyson Roof; Kian Alavy; Abbie Sorg; Cassidy Salazar; Melanie Madden; Paul Wagner; Jeremy Vetter; Lauren Acosta; John Kramkowski; Jennifer Schnellmann; Amanda Sokan; Justine Schluntz; Joost van Haren;

I. Opening and Civics Attribute Discussion

The meeting commenced with a presentation and discussion of the Civics Attribute Student Learning Outcome (SLO). Jeremy Vetter formally presented the approved language for this attribute.

Civics Attribute Student Learning Outcome: From one or more disciplinary, professional, and/or social perspectives, students will be able to demonstrate how civic knowledge supports the functioning of societies, engaged citizenship, and/or effective government at the local, national, and/or global levels and construct evidence-based arguments about civic action.

This learning outcome represents a comprehensive approach to civic education that encompasses multiple dimensions of civic engagement. The outcome is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate various disciplinary approaches while maintaining a clear focus on the practical application of civic knowledge. The emphasis on evidence-based arguments reflects the university's commitment to critical thinking and analytical reasoning as fundamental components of civic education.

The learning outcome's multi-level approach—spanning local, national, and global perspectives—ensures that students develop a nuanced understanding of civic participation across different scales of governance and community engagement. This framework allows instructors from diverse departments to integrate civic learning into their courses while maintaining disciplinary integrity.

Lauren Acosta confirmed that there were no additional comments regarding the Civics Attribute SLO, suggesting general consensus among committee members on the proposed language.

II. Committee Representation and Communication Channels

Jeremy Vetter made an important announcement regarding his dual role and the communication channels available to committee members. He noted that he serves as a member of the UNIV Advisory Group in his capacity as University-wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) Chair. He emphasized his willingness and availability to convey any concerns or ideas from UGC members to the UNIV Advisory Group meetings.

This dual representation creates an important bridge between the curriculum development work happening in the UGC and the strategic planning and oversight occurring in the UNIV Advisory Group. Committee members were encouraged to utilize this communication channel to ensure their perspectives and concerns reach higher-level discussions about the university's academic programs, particularly those related to the UNIV course sequence and general education requirements.

The establishment of clear communication pathways between committees is essential for effective governance and ensures that curriculum decisions are informed by input from multiple stakeholders across the university community.

III. Significant Policy Changes to Civic Education Requirements

Jeremy Vetter announced policy changes to general education curriculum beginning in the next academic year. These changes stem from recent revisions to the civics policy.

Key Changes Announced:

1. **Modification to Building Connections (BC) Course Requirements:** Starting next academic year, one of the three Building Connections courses will be replaced by a new Civic Institutions course. This represents a substantial restructuring of the general education curriculum and reflects the university's commitment to strengthening civic education as a core component of undergraduate education.
2. **Addition of Fifth Attribute:** A fifth attribute will be added to the general education program. This attribute will focus on Civic Inquiry, though Jeremy noted that the exact naming convention is still under discussion (referenced as "Civic ____" pending ongoing discussions). This addition demonstrates the university's expanded vision for civic education, moving beyond a single attribute to a more comprehensive approach that includes both institutional understanding and inquiry-based learning.

These policy changes represent a significant shift in how the university approaches civic education. The introduction of a dedicated Civic Institutions course acknowledges the importance of students understanding the structures, functions, and historical development of civic institutions at various levels of government and society. This course will provide students with foundational knowledge about how institutions shape civic life and enable democratic participation.

The addition of a Civic Inquiry attribute suggests a complementary focus on the process of civic engagement and investigation. While Civic Institutions provides structural knowledge, Civic Inquiry likely emphasizes the skills and methods students need to actively participate in civic life, investigate civic issues, and engage in informed civic action.

These changes received positive feedback from committee members.

IV. UNIV Advisory Group Session with UGC

Kian Alavy and Claudia Rankin, co-chairs of the UNIV Advisory Group, were welcomed to the meeting. They provided a brief presentation on the scope of the Advisory Group, a timeline of work to be completed (ending with a report submitted to the Provost in December), and then turned to a group activity involving two big questions. UGC members could respond with either post-it notes or with comments in a Padlet board online.

First Discussion Question:

Based on your understanding of these courses, what should students take away from their UNIV 101/301 experience? (URL: <https://padlet.com/rwinet1/based-on-your-understanding-of-these-courses-what-should-stu-w6op1q90g1zpc0w3>)

This question invited committee members to reflect on the learning objectives and outcomes they believe should be prioritized in the courses under discussion. The use of an open-ended question format encouraged creative thinking and allowed participants to contribute diverse perspectives on student learning goals.

Second Discussion Question:

Given that Student Success is our top Strategic Imperative, how might these UNIV courses be revised to help students get there? (URL: <https://padlet.com/rwinet1/given-that-student-success-is-our-top-strategic-imperative-h-wc94wdqq83qx3qj9>)

This question directly connected the curriculum discussion to the university's strategic priorities. By framing student success as the "top strategic imperative," the question prompted committee members to think critically about how curriculum design, course

structure, and learning outcomes can be optimized to support student achievement, retention, and degree completion.

V. Discussion on UNIV Course Requirements and ABOR Compliance

The latter portion of the meeting featured an in-depth discussion about the UNIV course sequence (UNIV 101 and UNIV 301) and its relationship to Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) requirements for general education. This discussion revealed important structural constraints and historical context for the university's general education program.

Jeremy Vetter provided information about the relationship between the UNIV courses and ABOR requirements. He explained that the university relies on UNIV 101 and UNIV 301 to reach the 32-unit minimum required by ABOR for general education. He emphasized that if these courses were eliminated from the general education program, students would still be required to take something else to meet the minimum unit requirement.

This statement clarifies that the UNIV courses are not supplementary or optional components but rather integral to the university's compliance with system-wide general education requirements. Any proposal to eliminate or significantly modify these courses would necessitate finding alternative ways to meet the 32-unit threshold.

Justine Schluntz: "Before the addition of UNIV 101 and 301, did ABOR require fewer units of Gen Ed?"

Jeremy Vetter: "Gen Ed used to require more units before the refresh."

Abbie Sorg confirmed Jeremy's answer.

Detailed Explanation of Changes:

Jeremy Vetter provided a comprehensive explanation of how the general education structure changed during the curriculum refresh:

- **Previous Structure:** The previous general education program included 6 Tier One courses, 4 Tier Two courses, and Foundations courses (Math, Writing, and Second Language).
- **Current Structure:** These courses have been replaced by 7 courses total in Building Connections (BC) and Exploring Perspectives (EP); Foundations courses (Math, Writing, and Second Language); and two UNIV 1-unit courses.
- **Net Effect:** The current structure requires fewer total units (32 units) than the previous general education program (between 36 and 41 units depending on major).

This explanation demonstrates that the general education refresh was designed not to increase the burden on students but rather to restructure and streamline requirements while maintaining ABOR compliance. The addition of UNIV 101 and 301, each carrying 1 unit, was part of a broader reorganization that reduced the total unit requirement while introducing new components focused on university transition, perspective-taking, and reflection.

The discussion highlighted the complex interplay between institutional goals, ABOR requirements, and student experience in curricular design.