

COMMON CURRICULUM ANNUAL REPORT (2015-2016)

[submitted to the Academic Affairs Council by John Cramsie, Director of General Education, 29 June 2016]

GEN ED BOARD

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Let me express my appreciation for the hard work of all the Gen Ed Board members. The Gen Ed Board is no longer 'easy service' and all of my colleagues on the board have responded in exemplary fashion. I particularly want to note the dedicated service by Mehmet Sener, Kristina Striegnitz, and Sara Watkins; Kristina and Fuat served during three of the busiest years in my time as Director and Sara contributed constantly and productively to our hectic schedule this year. They all made significant and important contributions to Common Curriculum assessment, our HUM/HUL/LCC review, and the Mellon Presidential Project for Global Learning. – John Cramsie

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Note: text in red denotes items for attention in 2016-2017; text in blue denotes somewhat longer-term matters of importance.

1) Mellon Presidential Project for Global Learning (PGL) and the Future of General

Education. In a systematic and sustainable fashion, PGL aims to introduce big questions and topics of global scope and importance into the Common Curriculum and related co-curricular activities. We are particularly interested in topics that a) have direct global-local connections, b) represent shared challenges at the local and global levels even if the direct connections may not be clear or present, or c) compress the distinction and distance between local and global. The Mellon Presidential Grant will fund two study tours abroad in summer 2016 and summer 2017 to China and Turkey respectively. We have signed an agreement to work with CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) to handle the organization and logistics of the study tours. CIEE has agreed to adapt existing CIEE study programs to suit our interests.

The study tours, lasting roughly ten days, are devoted to examining a global challenge from multiple disciplinary perspectives via seminars, workshops, and opportunities for travel and experiential learning. Faculty selected for the study tours commit to developing new content, new courses, or even a collaborative, coordinated set of modules and courses for the academic year after the tour. The focus of the study tours is social justice and sustainability, as explored through a rich variety of sub-topics such as economic inequality/instability, gender and power, human rights, climate disruption, cooperation/collective action, designing sustainability, energy, food and food insecurity. Collectively the two study tours get to grips with a compelling big question/challenge through its complex pieces and the connections among them.

Our progress for 2015-2016 included:

- Fall 2015: the selection committee chose eleven faculty members to participate in the China study tour. The study tour will be led by three directors: Joyce Madancy, Megan Ferry, and Cherrice Traver. Fourteen faculty members in total will travel to China in June 2016.
- Winter and Spring 2016: faculty worked with the study tour directors and DofGE on preliminary learning goals, curricular ideas, and possibilities for collaborative/linked teaching. The DofGE and Turkey study tour directors worked with CIEE to identify Berlin Germany as an alternative site for the study tour should political unrest and academic oppression in Turkey necessitate a change of site.
- Spring 2016: the selection committee chose nine faculty members to participate in the Turkey study tour. The study tour will be led by Hans Mueller, Michele Angrist, and John Rieffel. The DofGE will accompany the study tour to better support faculty upon return to campus and provide administrative continuity for the PGL going forward.

We have locked down speakers for the Common Curriculum convocations in 2016 and 2017 to support the PGL. In 2016, we will welcome Professor Tom Taylor, Chair of the History Department of Seattle University. Taylor has built an expertise in global learning and has a

new world history textbook coming out in 2017 based on travel narratives. He will talk to us about the historical process of cultural encounter and understanding (via his own work) and link that to the essential need to escape the 'eternal present' in contemporary global learning and engaging global challenges. He is amenable to leading/participating in multiple faculty development sessions during his visit. For 2017, we have secured Kate Raworth, senior research associate at the Oxford University Environmental Change Institute and author of an influential Oxfam Report on the intersection of social justice and sustainability. Her website is <http://www.kateraworth.com>. Raworth's visit will be timed to coincide with her book tour. Bringing both of these experts to campus will require the continued ability to over-spend the allocated General Education budget in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, for which the DofGE received approval in February 2016.

From Spring term 2016 and carrying through 2017, the DofGE will focus on successfully embedding and sustaining the PGL initiative into Union's academic programs over the longer term. The new CC website (see below) will map out a pathway through the program for students who want to take this kind of thematic focus to completing the general education requirements.

Working with the Gen Ed Board in Fall 2016 and in open discussions on campus throughout 2016-2017, we would like to explore faculty and student interest in creating a new general education program that builds on the PGLs focus on social justice and sustainability. Informal conversations with faculty and administrators in the past year has suggested a credible level of interest in such a program and that the time is probably right to begin creating a new general education program. For example, the two-part LCC review discussed on page 6 below already suggests a more comprehensive review and revision of the LCC requirement if not the starting point for a new program. It has already open up the possibility of changes to the program following a co-requisite structure. A co-requisite structure would not increase the number of courses needed to complete the program, but require that courses complete the existing requirements (such as HUM, SOCS, SET) in ways that addressed specific themes or subjects: diversity and equality, social justice, sustainability, global perspectives, or the like – all themes and topics under discussion more widely on campus and within the college's strategic plan. Just whether and how we pursue this in 2016-2017 will depend upon the new Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

2) Common Curriculum Designation Review. In 2015-2016 we undertook and completed a comprehensive review of CC designations of active courses. This is the first systematic application of the procedural guidelines explained here: http://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/_documents/ccdesignationreviewpolicy2014.pdf. Such reviews are not uncommon with general education programs, especially one as old as Union's.

The Gen Ed Board made an initial set of changes to CC designations for courses that did not demonstrably fit the respective content requirements; to be found at: <https://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/program-administration/assessment/information/>. In September 2015, the Gen Ed Board completed a list of courses about which it would seek more information regarding the content requirements. Chairs received a notification of the courses affected by the initial review and those under further review; they received guidelines for the information required by way of re-submission/explanation as well as three rolling deadlines for courses to be taught in Spring 16, Fall 16, and all remaining courses.

Six months later, on 19 February 2016, the Gen Ed Board received a request from the Arts and Humanities Division Chair on behalf of unidentified faculty to postpone the designation review then underway. The request and Gen Ed Board's unanimous response can be found in Appendix 1. The DofGE simultaneously sent the same information to the AAC Chair and confirmed the approval of the Dean of the Faculty for both the designation review and the response to the 19 February request. While not agreeing to postpone the review, the Gen Ed Board took action on several matters raised, including streamlining the review process and adopting a more specific statement of the content requirements for HUL, one that better reflected what the General Faculty approved when it voted for this program. The Gen Ed Board completed the CC designation review at its 8 June 2016 meeting and final information on the review was sent to chairs/faculty and the Registrar on 27 June 2016.

With the exception of the review of LCC and Study Abroad noted below, this completes the designation review and no further review is anticipated in the lifetime of the existing general education program. Faculty can apply to have a CC designation added to their courses at any time via a dedicated proposal form on our website.

3) Humanities and Literature Requirements. In Winter 2015 we reviewed peer schools for the equivalent of our HUL/HUM requirements. We found that History was more often in Humanities at our peer schools than any other division and Union is an outlier in not having a History requirement. Our HUM/HUL requirement grew out of a two-course Humanities distribution requirement with a specification that one course must be a Literature course, as currently defined. Our peer schools tend to cast their requirement as choosing courses in Humanities and Arts (typically encompassing fine arts and performing arts only).

On 3 May 2016, the Gen Ed Board received a request from the Arts and Humanities Division Chair asking the Gen Ed Board to adopt new content requirements for Literature (HUL) framed as the analysis and interpretation of 'literary language' with interpretive guidelines that included specifications of a diverse variety of 'texts', analytical topics, and pedagogical practices for critical thinking. The Gen Ed Board held an initial meeting with the Division chair and four faculty on 25 May to receive additional input on the request and put forward some initial questions. **The Gen Ed Board will resume consideration of the request in Fall 2016, after having more time to study the provisions.**

We expect discussion within Arts and Humanities regarding both Humanities requirements (HUL and HUM) to continue in the next academic year. Other ideas that have been part of previous discussions include: 1) prohibiting students from completing a second Literature course to fulfil the other humanities requirement; 2) requiring that the second humanities course (HUM) be a specifically visual/performing arts course; 3) eliminating the Literature requirement in favour of any two humanities courses; 4) expanding 'texts' in the HUL requirement to take in film, visual arts, music, and other works. It is the settled view of the Gen Ed Board that options 3 and 4 effectively eliminate the Literature requirement and therefore require a vote of the General Faculty under the governance process; options 1 and 2 above fall under the authority of the Gen Ed Board. The Gen Ed Board supports encouraging greater participation in visual and performing arts. We would consider pursuing option 1 on our own initiative. We would not pursue option 2 without the initiative coming from Humanities since significant curricular and resources issues arise in each case. The Gen Ed Board does not support eliminating the Literature requirement or recasting the requirement in favour of an open-ended definition of 'texts'.

4) Languages and Cultures (LCC) Review. In 2013-2014 we processed faculty and student surveys about the LCC requirement. In Winter 2015 we reviewed peer schools for the equivalent of our LCC requirement. The Gen Ed Board is actively pursuing two reviews, one concerning a foreign language requirement and the other of the relationship between study abroad and completion of the LCC requirement.

Among ranked liberal arts college and our 32-school peer group, Union is an outlier in not having a foreign language requirement, either as stand alone requirement or as part of a broader cultural understanding / cultural diversity requirement. More than 75% of our 32 peer schools have some kind of foreign language requirement. Faculty in Classics and Modern Languages both expressed a serious interest in developing a foreign language requirement for the CC. Following a productive meeting on 4 March 2015, to which Gen Ed Board members were invited, faculty in MLL and Classics formed a working group to develop proposals for a foreign language requirement. On 1 June 2016, the Gen Ed Board met with the working group for a presentation. They made very solid progress on the structure of a requirement, seeking broad input from departments across the campus, and thinking through questions related to resources/staffing, enrolment and scheduling, and the relationship of the requirement to the existing CC structure and requirements. **The working group hopes to present the Gen Ed Board with a formal proposal by Winter 2017 and the Gen Ed Board will seek to have the proposal pass through the governance process and be scheduled for evaluation of and vote by the General Faculty in Spring 2017.**

Beginning in Fall 2016, the Gen Ed Board we will work with International Programs to review the Union study abroad programs, chiefly to ensure they meet the content guidelines for the LCC requirement and determine just how and for what students should receive LCC credit in study abroad. We will do so with one eye on the possible foreign language requirement. Study Abroad programs vary greatly in character with the goals of LCC in mind. There are instances in which a full term abroad constitutes an immersive cultural experience, involving foreign language expertise and/or direct, sustained, experiential learning around cultural complexity. Some programs include partial but not complete attention to LCC requirements and goals while it is not clear that others address LCC at all beyond a (typically false) presumption that simply spending time in a 'foreign' country is sufficient to develop cultural understanding. We also intend to review most carefully the practices associated with mini-terms and LCC credit given; we are not satisfied that a mini-term with associated pre-departure and post-return coursework is sufficient to fulfil both LCC course requirements.

5) Common Curriculum Assessment. We have fully phased in the Common Curriculum assessment program. Details can be found at: <http://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/program-administration/assessment/>

We piloted the integrated online assessment of FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 in Union College Webapps in Winter and Spring terms 2016. Faculty had the option to use the existing paper assessment. The process will be fully online beginning with Fall 2016. We held several demonstration workshops for faculty and received helpful feedback both at the workshops and from faculty who used the online assessment. Project management at ITS delayed this project by more than a year; it was repeatedly moved from an active status to make way for projects accorded a higher priority or rushed to the front of the queue. The delays and postponement also meant that the same ground had to be covered and re-covered with ITS about the webapp and functionality.

The online assessment brings us much closer to integrating SRS/SCH-150 and FPR/FPR-H assessment within the now-established Common Curriculum assessment. The new assessment has substituted the respective FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 assessment rubrics for learning outcome A in the broader CC assessment. FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 instructors will also complete the same summative assessment of learning outcomes B and C to better integrate FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 within our programmatic goals. For example, the standard CC proficiency levels have replaced proficiency categories in the current FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 rubrics.

Dean Mark Wunderlich, Joseph Johnson (Director of Writing Services), and I share responsibility for FPR/FPR-H faculty development as well as joint workshops for FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 faculty. In summer 2016, we will work on developing an integrated set of FPR/SRS learning outcomes to better align the goals for both courses and create staged instruction in critical/analytical thinking and evidence- and research-based writing. At least one of the workshops in 2016-2017 will be devoted to this project.

Our midterm report to Middle States committed us to eventually moving FPR/FPR-H assessment and faculty development for FPR/FPR-H (workshops) entirely under the DofGE. The Gen Ed Board reaffirmed a commitment to integrated assessment in May 2015. It would make sense to hire the next DofGE with a view to taking this on and completing the final transfer of responsibility before/when the next Dean of Studies is hired; see below for additional points regarding responsibility for FPR/FPR-H.

6) Gen Ed Board Oversight of the FPR and SRS Requirements. Beginning in 2015-2016, the Gen Ed Board began exercising greater oversight of FPR/FPR-H and SCH-150 in addition to the established oversight of SRS. I worked with the Director of the Honors Program (Maggie Tongue) to put the oversight process in place for SRS/SCH-150 beginning this year. I met with Dean Mark Wunderlich in June 2016 to discuss the best way to achieve the proper level and type of Gen Ed Board review and oversight for FPR/FPR-H. We will work on procedures for use beginning in 2016-2017. It is important to emphasize that the Gen Ed Board will not be involved with the work by the Dean of Studies, the Dean of Academic Departments and Programs (DADP), and Scholars Program Director in the recruitment of FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 instructors, the selection of FPR/FPR-H or SCH-150 sections that meet the guidelines for the program, or any of the enrollment processes associated with FPR/FPR-H or SCH-150.

We have several reasons for developing our oversight in a more systematic fashion. First, it did not make sense that the courses fall outside the same level of review that the Gen Ed Board conducts with any courses that seek approval for CC requirements. Currently, all other courses must include a syllabus, description of how it meets the content requirements, and explanation of how it will address the student learning outcomes. As the two most important courses in the CC, courses taught for FPR and SRS credit should receive at least as much attention; previously only SRS received such attention.

Second, both FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 have unique pedagogical requirements and learning outcomes; they demand a certain kind of process and content that is specific to those requirements and goals. Through our review, we improve instruction and ensure all students receive a comparable level of attention to the learning outcomes. With SRS/SCH-150, the Gen Ed Board reviews new course proposals and requests varying levels of revision and improvements. In 2016, our reviews led to recommendations ranging from minor changes to a full revision and re-submission of a course.

Third, in my time as Director I have found discrepancies and misunderstanding about the learning outcomes and the expectations for SRS/SCH-150. It came to my attention that several SRSs over the past three years did not require the 15 to 18 page research paper. In addition, I received complaints from students that they lost out on an important learning opportunity from not doing so. Further, it was commonly believed that students in SCH-150 were not expected to complete the SRS research paper requirement. The college-wide SRS requirement preceded the development of a first-year 'scholars SRS' that became SCH-150. That some students or sections of SCH-150 did not complete the research paper in the past does not mean that was the intent when this general education program was created or that the General Faculty approved a different requirement for the Scholars.

Finally, faculty selected for the PGL study tours commit to developing new content, new courses, or even a collaborative, coordinated set of modules and courses beginning in the academic year after the tour. The most typical approach will be to align new FPR or SRS sections with existing courses that have new/revised content. We fully expect this opportunity to be open to faculty teaching FPR, FPR-H and SCH-150. This too necessitated a more direct involvement of the Gen Ed Board in the review of the courses so that it can oversee the curricular integration of the PGL with the Common Curriculum.

There are structural obstacles to our effective oversight of SRS. It has affected oversight of SRS throughout my time as Director and continues to affect the broader oversight now encompassing SCH-150. We simply do not have sufficient time to review new courses between a) the final determination of SRS/SCH-150 staffing by Chairs and the DADP for the coming academic year, b) the creation and dissemination of the SRS preference survey by which students identify six preferred SRSs, and c) the deadline to complete the enrolment of rising sophomores in SRS before advising and pre-registration in spring term.

Situations we face at the deadline to send the preference survey to students include:

- Postponing the preference survey to receive a course description; almost every year.
- Receiving a course description without a proposal or syllabus; almost every year.
- Receiving a course description and proposal without a syllabus; frequently.
- Receiving a title and pro-forma description written by a department chair for a faculty member who has not been hired or accepted a tender of employment; occasionally.
- Receiving a course description, proposal, and draft syllabus we determine needed complete revision and resubmission before it should have been offered to students; occasionally.
- Receiving a course description, proposal, and draft syllabus we determine was unsuitable to be offered to students with or without complete revision and resubmission; twice.

I hope to work with the DADP to improve this situation in 2016. Possible steps that can be applied to both FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 include:

- 1) Require the following information from Chairs when they submit initial staffing reports: that FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 faculty specify if they plan to teach an existing course or a new one. In the first instance, ask Chairs to remind faculty proposing to teach a new course that they must submit information by deadlines respective to FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150. Particularly for SRS/SCH-150, they should be reminded that they must submit a completed proposal in advance. (At the beginning of January 2016, I emailed all faculty about this and included the deadlines for submission; only one faculty member met the deadline and did so with a completed proposal. As the individuals more closely connected to individual faculty and

- FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 teaching assignments, the active participation of Chairs and the DADP would be very helpful.)
- 2) If little or nothing can be done about the existing time frame for staffing/scheduling, then enforce a prohibition on faculty new to SRS or faculty teaching new SRS from offering them in Fall term. This would allow the Gen Ed Board to concentrate on reviewing the proposal to determine the course's basic suitability and the adequacy of the description in the short window before the preference survey goes out. It would then allow the Board time to work with faculty in spring term and in fall term on the SRS as well as give faculty an opportunity to attend the fall SRS/SCH-150 workshops, which are typically designed around fundamentals. It is slightly less difficult managing faculty new to or new courses for FPR/FPR-H, but the Gen Ed Board feels this would be best practice for FPR/FPR-H outside of exceptional situations.
 - 3) Improve the current FPR/SRS staffing spreadsheet used by the DADP, Dean of Studies, and DofGE. In particular, the spreadsheet should a) call out changes to staffing and scheduling of FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 from one iteration to another, b) specify whether the faculty member will teach an existing or new course, and c) note how definite is the commitment of the faculty member listed. One of the problems with following up early with chairs and faculty is that final staffing/scheduling dispositions can and do change right up to the end of March. Some estimation of how certain it is that individual faculty will offer the course can help us begin the process of collecting proposals and information earlier.
 - 4) DADP, Dean of Studies, and DofGE should determine if it is possible to undertake preliminary recruiting, staffing, and scheduling of FPR/FPR-H and SRS/SCH-150 in the Fall term.

Finally, the Gen Ed Board has for several years expressed concern about the administrative structuring of the academic and curricular responsibilities for FPR/FPR-H. Currently the Dean of Studies handles FPR/FPR-H, from the selection and review of sections and faculty development to the complex enrolment management. Under Kimmo Rosenthal, General Education was the sole responsibility of the Dean of Studies. When the college created a Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies (Doug Klein), all of general education except FPR/FPR-H was committed to that position. The Dean of Studies (Kristin Bidoshi) retained responsibility for FYP/FYP-H for administrative convenience and because FPR/FPR-H played an important role in the Dean of Studies' responsibilities for the overall educational experience of first-year students, especially students' successful integration into campus life. For purposes of academic efficiency and cost, the Deans of Interdisciplinary Studies and Engineering were replaced by a set of faculty directors beginning in 2011. The Director of General Education took responsibility for providing academic and administrative leadership for the program in collaboration with administrative offices and governance groups as well as articulating the vision and goals of the program. One of the goals for the position was to develop a coherent

sense of purpose and mission for the program, most obviously reflected in the creation of an integrated program assessment encompassing all the CC requirements.

The Gen Ed Board noted that the restructuring around the creation of the faculty directors placed the administrative responsibility for the curricular and academic content of FPR/FPR-H outside the Gen Ed Board and/or the DofGE; it did not have concerns about the administrative responsibility for enrolment located in the Dean of Studies office. The Board did not accept that there is a continuing rationale for this separation, especially on grounds of efficiency or the integrated academic contribution of FPR/FPR-H to the Common Curriculum as a whole. The Board has envisioned a situation where the next DofGE would assume administrative responsibility under the Gen Ed Board (either immediately or in short-term transition over one academic year) for the academic components of FPR/FPR-H. These components would include the specific courses/offering, learning outcomes and assessment, the relationship of FPR/FPR-H to the rest of the CC, faculty development, and other associated academic-curricular features of the course/requirement. The Board would not want to involve the DofGE or itself in the current enrolment practices for FPR/FPR-H since they form an important part of the broader handling of the first-year experience for incoming students. But it does, again, seem to make sense to have the academic and curricular responsibilities located in the faculty governance body charged with overseeing the program and formulating plans and policies relating to it as well as the DofGE, who serves as director of the board and has responsibility for the administration of the program. **In 2016-2017, I would like to develop concrete steps to achieve an appropriate integration of this kind with a view to the timeframe mentioned above, page 3.**

7) Sophomore Research Seminar Program Development. This was the third year of our annual SRS/SCH-150 student research award. The General Education Board selected two students who completed outstanding research projects during 2014-2015. The awards went to: Sydney Paluch for 'Bend and Snap: Questioning Female Spectatorship through Representations of Sexualized Female Lawyers' written in Professor Andy Feffer's SRS 1963: *Betty Friedan and the Rebirth of Feminism*; Jonathan Covey for 'Storytelling: Healing Through Graphic Literature' written in Professor Judith Lewin's SRS *Jewish Graphic Novels*. Union College welcomed the author and lawyer Molly Gupstill Manning for the annual Common Curriculum convocation at which the research awards were presented. Manning spoke about her bestselling book *When Books Went to War: The Stories that Helped us Win World War II* (Houghton Mifflin, 2014). She told the story of the Armed Services Editions of books. Publishers produced the pocket-sized ASEs for millions for men and women in the U.S. armed forces who were hungry to read, learn, and pass the time. Manning's story of the ASEs inspired us to remember the power of reading and open minds, a timely reminder when books and reading, especially in the arts and humanities, are increasingly devalued and relegated to the side-lines by colleges and universities across the country.

For 2015-2016 we planned to consider changes to the SRS program. First, we intended to examine the feasibility of moving SRS to the winter and spring terms of the sophomore year for 2016-2017. We wished to do so for two reasons. Faculty simply do not want to teach the SRS in the same term that the Greek system rushes/recruits. The Greek culture has a malign effect on student engagement and performance in this very demanding course, the learning environment itself, and student success. Moving the enrolment process for SRS to the immediately preceding term (fall term) would remedy many logistical problems in settling SRS teaching assignments, obtaining course proposals, and allowing the Gen Ed Board to exercise due diligence and review of the proposals and program as detailed above. Second, we wanted to determine the feasibility of moving SRS to the Winter and Spring terms of students' first year. We would aim to make direct linkages between SRS and FPR as part of a 'one-two academic punch' in the first year experience of Union students. SCH-150 is currently taught in the first year and we think it is desirable for all Union students to have this intense first-year experience. FPR/SRS are the foundation courses in the CC and tasked particularly with training students in academic standards of inquiry, critical thinking and analysis, engagement with complex and diverse ideas, and the effective presentation of their ideas in discussion, presentation, and writing. Despite the common goals, the two courses do not typically build upon each other toward these broader academic goals; the division of responsibilities already noted on pages 6-7 exacerbates this situation. Further, departments and programs have infused the undergraduate research ethos into their curricula so regularly that the sophomore year now seems too late to engage students with modes of inquiry and research. FPR and SRS are the only two common experiences Union students have, the only two college-wide opportunities to establish and create a shared experience of academic

excellence and rigour. For all of these reasons, we would like to create a stronger first-year experience by properly linking FPR and SRS and working to establish opportunities for more deliberate connections between content, pedagogy, and learning outcomes.

We should note here that in the previous general education program the college scheduled the entire first year class into three required courses, FPR and two history survey courses. While there might be some resistance to a second required course in the first year, Union students in the past did, nonetheless, complete three required courses in the first year, the Registrar scheduled and enrolled the students, and departments and programs accommodated three first year requirements in their course offerings. There is no practical reason why our administrative processes or curricula cannot support two required first-year courses, having once supported three. As an added benefit, removing the SRS from the sophomore year would free the second year from any required courses in the CC, thus eliminating a not insignificant number of conflicts between SRSs and courses in students' majors (especially in hierarchical or rigid fields).

Initial and informal conversations with faculty and administrators suggested these are not wholesale changes worth taking on now, or, perhaps, in the lifetime of the existing program. However, we will pilot a program of three linked FPR-SRS, open in the first instance to faculty associated with the Project for Global Learning, in 2017-2018. The DofGE has met with both the DADP and Dean of Studies on the initial logistics for the pilot program. DofGE will actively recruit faculty early in Fall 2016 with a view to having commitments in place for the three linked sets by Winter term 2017.

For several years, I have received complaints from colleagues teaching SRSs that the language and writing skills of international students present real obstacles to those students' success in the course. Various office and individuals have been responsive to these concerns, but there has been no systematic or coherent approach to this problem, either as it affects SRS or other courses on campus. We strongly encourage the new Dean of the Faculty and VPAA to make a coherent response to this problem a priority, including reviewing the marketing, admission, and student support practices of offices on campus.

8) SCLB/SET Enrolment and Review. At the end of Spring 2015, the Gen Ed Board considered undertaking a revision of the SCLB/SET requirements, motivated by 1) intractable enrolment and staffing problems; 2) enhancing the possibilities of better integrating Center 1 and 2 faculty and courses as part of the Mellon Presidential Project for Global Learning (PGL); 3) meeting the goals laid out in the 2013 Strategic Plan; 4) requirements at peer schools. We postponed any such review after Division 3 formed a sub-committee to (once again) study the enrolment and staffing issues with both SET and SCLB courses. The sub-committee included the Division 3 and 4 Gen Ed Board reps. We asked the members to consider widely and in detail what the goals are or should be for the SCLB and SET requirements, in particular how the requirements should meaningfully shape students' four years at Union and their lives as liberal arts graduates after leaving Union, especially for non-science and -engineering students. We also supplied them with a discussion document of a one-course Science, Engineering, and Technology in Society requirement. **The Gen Ed Board recessed for the year having received a preliminary report that the sub-committee circulated a proposal and was soliciting input from faculty/departments in Division 3.**

9) Common Curriculum Website. We have begun migrating the Common Curriculum website from CMS to Wordpress. Older projects for version 2.0 of the Common Curriculum website envisioned under CMS have been revised and postponed until the new Wordpress version 1.0 is complete. **We hope to have a first version of this website ready by the end of Fall 2016. We have four initial goals for the website revamp:**

- Present a more visually compelling and attractive portal to the program.
- Ensure students are able to easily obtain the nuts and bolts information about the program and the requirements.
- Encourage students to find pathways through the program that respond to their interests and offer opportunities to find and explore new interests, particularly around the emerging curriculum associated with the Project for Global Learning.
- We will particularly encourage departments and programs to help us build these openings. For example, helping us design information and links for students who have interests in creative arts, gender and power, global challenges, or the like.
- Ensure faculty and staff are able to easily obtain the nuts and bolts information about the program and their responsibilities under it, including program assessment, course proposals, opportunities for faculty development.

COMMON CURRICULUM ANNUAL REPORT (2015-2016) – Appendix 1

From: "Mosquera, Daniel" <mosquerd@union.edu>

Date: Thursday, 18 February 2016 20:44

To: Union <education@union.edu>

Subject: Revision of HUm and Arts Designations

Dear John and members of the Gen Ed Board,

At our Humanities & Arts division meeting on Feb 16 we discussed the topic of the new General Policy for Reviewing Common Curriculum Designations, a policy that was approved in Oct 2013 and whose implementation started in Jan 2014. We also discussed current designations for Humanities and Arts courses and their representation in Gen Ed policies, as stipulated in part III (CC Content Requirements) of the Program Assessment Overview and represented or echoed in various CC related documents, from Common Curriculum Advising to the more recent Common Curriculum Designation Review: Resubmission for CC Credit form.

What has become evident to those of us in this conversation within the division, during last year as much as during this one, is that the language now in use to describe the Humanities and Arts *in what they (can) do* and the curricular endorsement to the content and practices *they embody* is restrictive, ambiguous, or formulaic in ways that impact adversely our evolution and the school's ability to reflect on the depth and interdisciplinarity we collectively seek to promote. This has been particularly frustrating in the context of recertification procedures and new layers of bureaucratic work created with good intentions but currently unsatisfactory in both resolving problems that are broader than whether a CC designation reflects an accurate pedagogic promise and mitigating a cumulative tax on faculty time. The division would like to review the language and designations now in use (currently HUL and HUM) and examine alternative descriptions and designations, understanding that such a goal might eventually result in a general faculty vote. To this end, I will as FEC Humanities and Arts division chair, convene a representative group of colleagues from each department in the division to iron out some of the discrepancies and to try to coalesce around a common set of curricular priorities and content goals that is broader and more inclusive than the current one without losing sight of existing assessment criteria but aware that some of the language in this criteria may not be entirely suitable.

We would like to ask, as a result, that the Gen Ed Board put on pause the current Common Curriculum Designation Review until we are able to provide alternative designations. From our meeting it was apparent that the division wants to find a constructive solution that is acceptable to us as well as to the Gen Ed Board. It would be much appreciated and also valuable then if—once we have gone beyond preliminary revisions and started crafting more concrete ideas during the Spring term—the division could meet with the Board members to discuss our findings.

Best regards, Daniel

Daniel Mosquera; Division Chair
Arts and Humanities
3 March 2016

Dear Daniel,

The Gen Ed Board met over two consecutive weeks to discuss your 18 February 2016 request on behalf of Arts and Humanities regarding the Common Curriculum (CC) designation review. We considered the matter very carefully. While we do not feel we can halt the designation review, we have responded constructively to several issues raised in your request and encourage the division to continue its discussions of the role of Arts and Humanities in general education.

Halting the Designation Review.

The Gen Ed Board does not find it either desirable or practical to halt the designation review. There remain roughly thirty outstanding courses across the campus out of 120 total when the school year began. We are not willing to postpone the completion of the process and leave existing courses, faculty, and students in limbo for an indeterminate period while a working group in Arts and Humanities embarks on a review of both the CC Humanities requirements generally (HUL and HUM) and the specific wording of the content requirements for them, especially the Literature requirement (HUL). We see many practical problems. Among them, we would be left in the position of approving new courses (permanent and one-time) using content requirements under review/revision. Second, we consider the proposed time-frame to form a working group and redraft content requirements optimistic. Finally, the request specifically includes the possibility of drafting revised CC Humanities requirements that would require approval of the General Faculty; such a proposal could not pass through the governance process until sometime well into the 2016-2017 academic year. Right now, the request suggests a near-indefinite postponement leaving two-thirds of courses reviewed and one-third on hold. The proposal would lock in the ambiguities, inconsistencies, and complications for students, faculty, and the requirements that the CC designation review was intended to clear up.

As I wrote in early February, I'm sorry this process caught you or others unaware. I noted then that it is not unusual for a board like ours to undertake this kind of review to support the integrity of the requirements; we already do this with WAC courses. The designation review policy has been in place for two years and this review was included in my last two annual reports (2013-14 and 2014-15) to the AAC and Therese McCarty. Neither when I met with the AAC nor with Therese did anyone raise an objection, including the Humanities reps on the AAC at the time. Further, let me reiterate that the Gen Ed Board and I do not plan to repeat this review. Please review the designation policy (<http://www.union.edu/offices/gen-ed/documents/ccdesignationreviewpolicy2014.pdf>) in view of concerns that we will now review designations routinely. That is not the case. Finally, everyone on the Gen Ed Board had input on this at all stages, including the policy, forms, deadlines, etc. Pattie Wareh and Claire Bracken ensured that Arts and Humanities received excellent representation on this matter (and others); they represented the division's interests and views carefully and concretely and reported back to the division within the processes for doing so set up by your division chair.

Workload.

We have carefully reviewed our initial expectations and the paperwork associated with the review. *We have replaced the existing forms with a single streamlined form that reduces the workload considerably for courses under review.* In addition, we will also modify the submission deadlines. Courses to be taught in Fall 2016 must be submitted for review by 25 April; this deadline is necessary to provide the Registrar with accurate course information for advising purposes. Courses to be taught anytime after Fall 2016 must be submitted for review by 1 June 2016. Department chairs will receive an update by the week of 7 March.

Problems with the phrasing of the Literature (HUL) content requirements.

The Gen Ed Board takes very seriously any phrasing problems with the Literature content requirements and confusion they might create for faculty members. For our colleagues and students, we want to be as specific and unambiguous as possible with the content requirements, to ensure they accurately reflect the program approved by the General Faculty and the basis by which the Gen Ed Board meets its various responsibilities to evaluate course content. Therefore, we agreed at our meeting on 1 March to replace immediately the existing content requirement language with the more precise, specific language that follows. We drew on your input, our collective experience with the program from its inception, and the course approval process during our respective tenures on the Gen Ed Board. We agree that this more accurately defines Literature under the requirement, as used in practice.

LITERATURE (HUL) Content Requirements

A Literature course will provide instruction and guidance through which students:

- Read and interpret primary written works of Literature throughout the course, with or without secondary studies and analyses. For purposes of this requirement, Literature is defined exclusively as short- and long-form written works of prose and/or verse.

Revisiting the Common Curriculum Humanities requirements.

The Gen Ed Board and I re-affirm the General Faculty's original commitment to require students to engage in the particular kind of reading and textual analysis specified by the Literature (HUL) requirement. We do not in any way, thereby, deny the vitality and importance of the many kinds of textual analysis carried out across Arts and Humanities. Indeed, we welcome students' ability to engage them by completing the Arts and Humanities distribution requirement (HUM) as well as the Languages and Cultures (LCC) requirements to which the division contributes so many courses and learning opportunities.

That said, we recognize the interest among members of Arts and Humanities to re-examine the CC Humanities requirements. As our conversations with members of the division, my 14 January 2015 letter to the AAC, and support for submitting a language proposal requirement demonstrate, both the Board and I have long welcomed the active engagement of the division for strengthening the place of Arts and Humanities in the CC. As you know, this general

education program is more than a decade old. In my first meeting with the new Vice-President for Academic Affairs, it is my intention to take up the question of beginning the process of creating a new general education program. I am optimistic that the faculty are ready for this process to begin and that the Mellon Presidential Project for Global Learning study tours to China (2016) and Turkey (2017) offer the ideal opening to craft a program that commits departments and programs across the campus to engaging with our students fundamental global challenges to social justice, sustainability, and our common humanity with our students. I do not know how such a program could succeed without Arts and Humanities located at the center, especially with its array of analytical perspectives and critical practices. I also note the interest in creating a global studies minor signalled in the most recent Modern Languages and Literatures staffing/loading proposal (and internal department loading agreement). We hope that any discussion of general education requirements that now takes place in the division will do so with that in mind and we welcome the early, energetic involvement of the division in laying the basis for a new general education program. Regardless, we stand ready to consult on or review any proposal approved by the Arts and Humanities Division for changes to the existing program requirements.

Let me close by saying that the Gen Ed Board took very seriously your request. If you should decided to pursue the matter further via the governance system, the next step would be to raise it with the AAC, most obviously via the division representative for Arts and Humanities. I will cc the Chair of the AAC on this letter in the event you choose to do so; I have also appended below the request I received from you for reference purposes.

On Behalf of the General Education Board,



Professor John Cramsie, Ph.D. (St Andrews), B.A. (Minnesota), Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, British and Irish Studies, Director of General Education

e-cc. Mike Vineyard, Chair of the AAC

Therese McCarty, Vice-President for Academic Affairs