

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

Faculty Senate

University College and General Education Committee

Report #2002-03-1

As approved by the Faculty Senate on October 24, 2002

This report reflects the work of both the 2001-02 UCGE Committee last spring and the 2002-03 UCGE Committee this fall. The following matters are presented to the Faculty Senate. Some matters are for informational purposes and others require approval by the Faculty Senate and the President. Those actions that require approval are so identified.

I. Foreign Language/Cross-cultural Competence Core Area (FC)

A. INFORMATIONAL (No action required)

**In the February 2002 report of the 2001-02 University College and General Education Committee, the committee reported as informational that they had approved guidelines for course proposals in the Social Sciences (S) area and the Foreign Language/Cross-cultural Competence (FC) area of the General Education Program. Members of the Senate were referred to the following website for further information:
http://www.uri.edu/facsen/GenEd_Appendix_A.html.**

It has been the committee's position that the guidelines do not require Faculty Senate approval because they are consistent with the approved definitions for the two core areas.

Questions were raised at the February 28 Faculty Senate meeting about the Foreign Language/Cross-cultural Competence guidelines which were broader than those recommended by the FL/CC working group in that they ensured that multicultural concerns within the borders of the United States were included along with international issues.

Of major concern to the UCGE Committee was ensuring that students are exposed to courses that include a multicultural or

diversity requirement. In May 2002, the UCGE Committee agreed to recommend the addition of a Diversity overlay requirement in which two of the courses students take within the General Education Program must include the "examining human differences" skill.

Because the committee agreed to bring forward to the Faculty Senate the recommendation for a Diversity requirement, the following revised guidelines proposed by the Foreign Language Cross-cultural Competence working group, including their recommendation for a diversity requirement (see note below), were approved this fall:

Foreign Language / Cross Cultural Competence

The Foreign Language / Cross-cultural Competence requirement helps prepare students for life in an increasingly internationalized environment.

Courses satisfying the Cross Cultural Competence requirement will introduce students to significant comparisons between U.S. cultures and foreign cultures.

To qualify, a course will:

- address questions of international cultural differences on a theoretical level,
- exemplify those differences with significant examples, and
- provide opportunities for demonstrating competence by putting those insights and knowledge into practice.

For the purposes of this requirement, the following definitions apply:

Culture: the integrated patterns of thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of groups.

Foreign: generally outside the United States, but inclusive of approved in-country learning experiences in the context of a language other than English.

Competence: a set of congruent insights, understandings, behaviors, and attitudes that permit a person to function effectively.

[Note: This working committee makes two assumptions: 1) That the Foreign Language/Cross-Cultural -competency requirement is not a substitute for a diversity requirement. 2) It shares the Faculty Senate view that issues of multiculturalism within United States culture are too important to be relegated to a specific course or narrowly defined requirement, but instead should be infused throughout the curriculum in such a way that every graduating URI student should have the experience of grappling, repeatedly, with multicultural issues. In that regard, we note that under the current plan general education courses must incorporate opportunities to practice three of the Integrated Skills. It follows that some of the eight skills are likely to receive more emphasis than others, and that it will be possible for a student to graduate without having taken a single course that focuses on examining human differences.

Therefore, we urge the Senate to add teeth to the Human Differences concept by requiring that somewhere in each student's career, in the general education courses, the major, or the electives, he or she must complete at least two courses with an emphasis on Human Differences.]

B. RECOMMENDATION (Requires approval)

The UCGE Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate approve the following modification to the General Education program approved in the spring of 2001:

That the General Education Program requirements include a "Diversity" overlay. This overlay would not increase the number of credits required in the general education program.

This would require that two of the courses taken as part of a student's general education program be selected from courses designated by a "D." Courses approved for the "D" designation would meet the requirements for the examining human differences skill area (all sections of that "D" course must include the examining human differences skill).

II. Social Sciences Core Area (S)

A. INFORMATIONAL (No action required)

At the direction of the UCGE Committee, the Chairperson sent a memorandum to all department chairs and deans on October 4, 2002 asking for submission of proposals for the Social Sciences area via the appropriate college deans by December 15, 2002.

B. RECOMMENDATION (Requires approval)

The UCGE Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate approve the following courses for the (S) area of the revised General Education Program (2001):

***PSY 113** General Psychology (examining human differences, reading complex texts, writing effectively)

***SOC 212** Families in Society (examining human differences, reading complex texts, writing effectively)

***SOC 230** Crime and Delinquency (examining human differences and two of the following: reading complex texts, use of qualitative data, use of quantitative data, writing effectively)

***SOC 242** Sex and Gender (examining human differences and two of the following: reading complex texts, speaking effectively, use of qualitative data, writing effectively)

***If the Faculty Senate and the President approve the Diversity overlay requirement, these courses would be assigned the [D] designation.**

III. Letters Core Area

A. INFORMATIONAL (No action required)

The UCGE Committee agreed to the following guidelines recommended by the Letters area working group:

Courses in Letters (L) will:

1. enhance students' self-awareness as independent readers and thinkers and encourage consultation with their peers in intellectual work
2. present knowledge that describes the human condition, past and present
3. equip students with analytical skills necessary for humanistic inquiry within or across individual disciplines
4. create assignments that foster critical reflective inquiry and its application to scholarly work and personal values.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS (Require approval)

1) The UCGE Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate approve the following modification to the definition of the Letters core area:

Letters - courses that examine human values, thought and culture in social, historical, and philosophical contexts through the use of primary sources and critical expositions.

2) The UCGE Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate approve the following course for the (L) area of the revised General Education Program (2001):

APG 327 History of Physical Anthropology (reading complex texts, writing effectively, using qualitative data)