

**Curricular Affairs Committee  
of the Faculty Senate**

**MEMO**

**To:** The UVM Faculty Senate  
**From:** Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair  
**Date:** April 5, 2018  
**Re:** Approval of a proposal to establish a General Education Coordinating Committee as a standing subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee

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At its meeting on April 5, 2018, the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the establishment of a General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) as a standing subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee. Inauguration of a GECC is timely and of particular importance given University's upcoming NEASC Reaccreditation. Attached are a cover memo from Faculty Senate President Cathy Paris and a description of the GECC.



The University of Vermont  
FACULTY SENATE

**Memo**

To: Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee  
From: Catherine Paris, President, UVM Faculty Senate  
Re.: Proposal to form the General Education Coordination Committee  
Date: April 1, 2018

General Education Coordinating Committee, Background and Rationale

UVM's General Education program - currently comprising Diversity, Foundational Writing and Information Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning, and Sustainability - came into being in response to a directive from NEASC, our regional accrediting body, following UVM's 2009 reaccreditation review. In the course of that review, NEASC instructed UVM to develop a "coherent and substantive" general education requirement that "embodies the institution's definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live." Accordingly, then-Provost Jane Knodell charged a task force to design a system of general education and to present it to the Curricular Affairs Committee and the Faculty Senate. Since the 2012 implementation of the first general education requirement, Foundational Writing and Information Literacy, three other general education requirements have been approved and put in place at UVM, each through the efforts of a dedicated group of faculty committed to that topic. However, the activities of the Gen. Ed. groups were not coordinated, thus each requirement and the policies and processes governing it were developed independently, resulting in systemic inefficiency and confusion on the parts of students, faculty, and staff alike.

In 2016, Faculty Senate President Cathy Paris and Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning Brian Reed called an informal meeting of the four General Education committee chairs, along with others who support Gen. Ed. at UVM (e.g., the chair of the Senate Curricular Affairs Committee, the University Registrar, and the Provost's Faculty Fellow for Assessment), in order to discuss policy and process questions of common concern. Later that year, the co-chairs of the Sustainability Curriculum Review Committee recommended that the Faculty Senate form a General Education Committee to address these matters. Several models for such a committee were considered; eventually, the model proposed here, a ***General Education Coordinating Committee*** (GECC), to be established as a standing subcommittee of the Senate Curricular Affairs Committee, was agreed upon. The structure and function of the GECC are explained in the attached document.

With this document, we request CAC review and approval of the concept and the adoption of the GECC as a standing subcommittee of the Curricular Affairs Committee.



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## **UVM General Education Coordinating Committee**

### **The Mission and Purpose of UVM's General Education Program**

The General Education Program reflects the faculty's aspirations for all UVM undergraduates. General Education is the foundation of a transformative educational experience that prepares students to become accountable leaders who bring to their work dedication to the global community, a grasp of complexity, effective problem-solving and communication skills, and an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct. General Education courses transcend disciplinary boundaries; they help students develop integrated competencies that are essential to lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

### **Committee Description**

The UVM General Education Coordinating Committee (GECC) is a standing subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC). Its purpose is to coordinate the activities, policies, and processes of the individual General Education Committees - currently Diversity, Foundational Writing and Information Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning, and Sustainability - bringing to the delivery of the General Education curriculum increased clarity, consistency, and efficiency. Following the formal establishment of the GECC, the individual General Education Committees will report directly to the GECC (Fig. 1).

### **Structure**

GECC membership includes the chair/co-chairs of each individual General Education Committee or their designate<sup>1</sup>, the Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee, the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning (ex officio, non-voting), and the Faculty Senate President. The committee chair will be appointed by the President of the Faculty Senate.

Various other faculty members and University officers with specific expertise will from time to time be asked to meet with the GECC. Examples include the Registrar, the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Provost's Faculty Fellow for Assessment, and the Assistant Provost.

<sup>1</sup>If it is impossible for the chair of an individual Gen. Ed. committee to represent that committee on the GECC, then a designate may be appointed. It is important, however, that the designate be appointed for the course of the academic year in order to promote GECC consistency and cohesiveness.

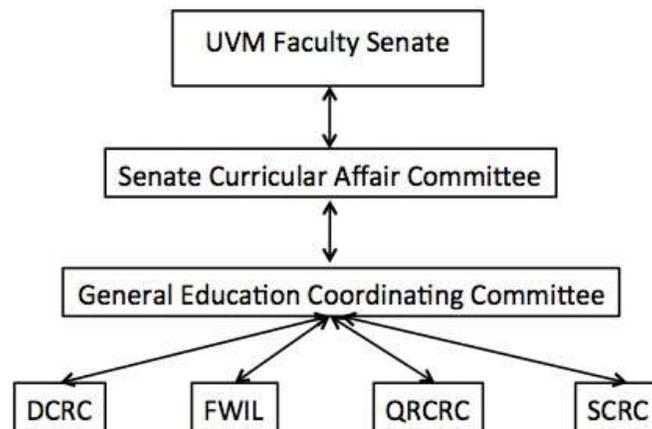
## Functions

The first priority of the GECC is to work out the individual General Education Curriculum Committees' policies and processes and bring them into alignment with one another. Other functions include:

- establishing and maintaining a visible, informative, and compelling web presence for the General Education curriculum
- developing operating procedures for new General Education requirements
- participating in the development of a plan for regular, ongoing assessment of the General Education Program and its identified student learning outcomes
- developing a plan for insuring portability of General Education courses among academic units
- advocating for the role of General Education in the academic life of the University
- determining the resources necessary for the oversight and coordination of, and communication about the UVM General Education Program and making recommendations to ensure adequate funding.

## Meeting Schedule

The committee will typically meet on a monthly basis during the academic year, but the meetings may be more or less frequent as deemed necessary for the business at hand.



**Fig. 1: Oversight of the General Education Curriculum, University of Vermont**