

## Discussion Draft / GER Alignment Task Force / 1 November 2015

### Summary

In response to the Faculty Alliance request for a plan by 1 November 2015, the GER Alignment Task Force proposes a three-year timeline for the disciplinary alignment of GER courses across the system.

- The MATH and ENGL/PRPE-DEVE Alignment Task Forces demonstrated that UA faculty working in concert and across institutional lines can develop coherent and student-friendly curricular pathways through two of the most important GER processes.
- The three-year timeline allows faculty to continue collaboration on curriculum, creates the opportunity for additional initiatives at the institutional and system level, and sets the stage for a systematic review of general education across the UA system.
- We recommend that the current Faculty Alliance GER Alignment Task Force remain in effect as the main coordinating body for the continued GER discussions.

### Guiding Principles

Any attempt to adjust the General Education Requirements across the UA System must proceed with the utmost thoughtfulness, collaboration, and consideration, for the GER touches every student and every program. So, throughout the process, our response to the BOR's request has been guided by the following principles:

#### Student Centered

- Student success
- Curricular transparency
- Clear achievement pathways
- Consistent transferability
- Elimination of barriers & inconsistencies

#### Institutionally Responsive

- System-wide alignment & coherence
- Institutional autonomy & distinctiveness
- Shared governance
- Faculty control of the curriculum
- Accreditation requirements

The thoroughness of the review and of faculty deliberation minimizes the potential for unintended consequences and creates the opportunity for long-term alignment and stability.

### Timeline

Crucial to this plan is the fact that each institution is at a different place in its reconsideration of the GER, and each is constrained by separate and distinct curricular processes and timelines. For example, UAF is in the process of revising the GER from a 'core' to a 'menu' model, creating a parallel structure across all three campuses. UAA is in the middle of a multi-year GER assessment process, based upon long-standing GER outcomes, in the lead up to the NWCCU accreditation site visit. The proposed timeline allows for further discussion and adaptation to ongoing concerns across the system.

- **AY2016-17: Disciplinary Teams & Intercampus Discussions**  
Establishment of disciplinary 'communities of practice' for each GER disciplinary category, with one member from each campus representing each of the disciplinary areas in the GER (communication, arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences), paralleling the process and structure of the MATH and ENGL groups.
- **AY2017-18: Intra-campus Discussions & Curriculum Processes**  
Discussion of disciplinary plans at each home campus (including community campuses) to establish faculty buy-in, to determine curriculum processes, to clear faculty senate, and to move through the curriculum processes.
- **AY2018-18: System-wide Coordination**  
Coordination of disciplinary plans into a programmatic approach to the GER and establishment of system-wide coordination processes, including curriculum mapping and development of course-level student learning outcomes.

We propose calendar-year segments rather than academic-year approach to allow for additional supported summer work, as necessary.

In addition to laying the ground work for a coherent system-wide approach to general education, the three-year timeline will allow each campus (1) to conduct in-depth discussions with affected faculty and programs, (2) to develop institution-specific guidelines and procedures, (3) to address specific accreditation-related GER concerns, and (4) to allow for careful consideration of system-wide priorities and the development of system-wide procedures.