May 6, 2016

To: Dean Van Galen, Chancellor
    116 North Hall
    University of Wisconsin-River Falls

From: James Graham, Chair
      Faculty Senate
      University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Re: UWRF Faculty Senate Resolution 2015-16/9

The following resolution was approved with amendments with 16 in favor, 0 opposed, and 4 abstentions by the Faculty Senate on May 4, 2016:

A Resolution from the General Education and University Requirements Committee
(Rellen Hardtke – Chair) (See attached).
WHEREAS the purpose of the General Education and University Requirements (GEUR) Committee is to supervise the General Education Program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls [FS 03/04-17], [FS 07/08-20],

and the GEUR committee has a duty to promote and support the General Education program of UWRF [FS 07/08-20], to recommend changes in the General Education structure to the Faculty Senate [FS 06/07-27], and to determine whether or not the course offerings for each General Education goal are sufficient to meet student needs;

**Impact on Students**

WHEREAS the General Education and University Requirements (GEUR) system serves all undergraduate UWRF students,

the mission of UWRF is to help prepare students to be productive, creative, ethical, engaged citizens and leaders with an informed global perspective,

UWRF’s vision includes fostering a challenging, supportive, student-centered environment that is characterized by academic excellence and inspiring and preparing students to serve as ethical, informed citizens and leaders in an increasingly complex, diverse, and global environment,

all departments and programs benefit by having well-rounded, well-informed students with critical thinking skills that are produced by GEUR experiences,

students need an adequate array and quality of GEUR courses in which to enroll,

there is too much pressure on a few GEUR courses to serve a large number of students,

placing first year students in very large sections of General Education courses hurts UWRF’s reputation for small classes, one-on-one faculty interactions, and is at odds with our goals of increasing first year student retention rates,

there is an expectation that universities should produce well-rounded graduates who can be continual learners and capable of retraining and changing careers, and the political pressure to become a job training institution is real, but ultimately bad for the state, students, and families,

and if students are unable to get classes they need for graduation, the legislature’s goal of cutting college costs is ultimately undermined, as are our efforts to increase student recruitment and retention;

**Impact on GEUR**

WHEREAS the shortage of GEUR course options may result in copious course exceptions or waivers, and routine use of such exceptions may devalue the overall purpose and goals of GEUR,

pressure may increase to waive prerequisites for University Requirements, affecting course rigor and quality,

4/21/16
departments have little or no incentive to teach General Education courses during difficult budget times,

dramatic changes were abruptly made to General Education, Liberal Arts, and minor requirements without adequate study, consultation, input, or reflection, and these changes have not been subjected to subsequent evaluation or validation of cost-savings claims,

General Education and University Requirements have been undermined and devalued in spite of platitudes to the contrary,

there has not been a clear or sustainable method for funding and crediting GEUR offerings,

the College of Arts and Sciences has been providing and financially supporting the great majority of GEUR student needs from within its own budget for a long time,

the number and quantity of adjunct positions has been decimated by rounds of budget cuts, adjuncts teach a large percentage of GEUR courses, and this has had a disproportionate effect on UWRF’s ability to meet the needs of its GEUR program,

and UWRF is losing important faculty members and their expertise, some of which are critical to GEUR offerings;

**Relationship to Greater Budget Issues**

WHEREAS one of the core values of UWRF is integrity,

we have received inconsistent explanations for the local budget shortfall,

we no longer have an internal auditor, a CBO with experience in academia, sufficient expertise and staffing in the budget office, or adequate administrative oversight of fiscal matters in real time,

the current funding for GEUR seems to be structurally unsustainable,

UWRF lacks a clear and sustainable funding model for GEUR,

part of the College of Arts & Sciences budget was kept off the books for a number of years, preventing the Dean from having accurate expense information until quite recently, and the funding of GEUR offerings involved an ex post facto “truing up” of the CAS budget,

other universities have already developed successful models for planning, delivering, and funding General Education and liberal arts programs,

faculty lines are “centralized” and eliminated or moved without consultation or involvement of shared governance, and these faculty lines have been eliminated or moved without regard for effects on GEUR,

the loss of programs and faculty adversely affects the availability of General Education offerings,
this is a University-wide issue and not a “CAS problem”,

the reassignment of faculty lines is de facto program prioritization,

these decisions are made in private by a small number of people,

the Colleges are now expected to provide an adequate array of GEUR courses and seats at the expense of their own quality programs,

UWRF must be careful with decisions made during apparent crises because short term changes tend to become long term changes,

and UWRF, in general, and every campus member with budgetary responsibilities needs more reliable accounting methods and communications;

It is hereby RESOLVED that the General Education and University Requirements committee and Faculty Senate support an adequate funding of UWRF’s GEUR program with a well-defined, transparent, trackable, and distributed fiscal model,

that administration alter the current modus operandi of pooling faculty lines whereby a small group of administrators are the only stakeholders who have input into how these faculty lines are utilized,

that College Deans should play a greater role in budget deliberations and staffing decisions,

that budget discussions should be open to the greater campus community, in line with open meeting laws, the spirit of shared governance, and collaborative leadership,

that GEUR commitments be adequately considered in staffing decisions and staff reductions,

and that we thank the College of Arts and Sciences Dean for his long-term highly successful management of GEUR offerings and seat availability.

UWRF General Education and University Requirements Committee
April 21, 2016