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

From: Wes Chapin, Chair
Faculty Senate  
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

April 11, 2013

RE: UWRF Faculty Senate Motion 2012-13/117

At the April 10, 2013 meeting of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Faculty Senate, this motion was passed, and it is effective immediately. The motion is forwarded to you for your action.

Motion from the Executive Committee (Wes Chapin, Chair) to receive the General Education Review from the General Education and University Requirements Committee (Don Leake, Chair)

Approved ☑

Disapproved

__________________________________________  4/19/13
Dean Van Galen, Chancellor  
Date
GEURC Report to Senate  
Concerning the 2012-2013 Program Review  
of General Education

The 2012-2013 program review of general education has been completed. All  
documents associated with the review may be found on FalconShare at  
\Campus\Collaboration\General Education\2012-2013\GEURC Program Review.  
These include: a) GEUR Program Assessment Plan and Review Process, b) GE  
Review Timeline, c) GE Program Review Final Report, d) GE Appendix A General Ed  
Courses, e) GE Appendix B Univ. Req. Courses, f) Appendix C Assessment Reports  
Timeline, g) Appendix D GEURC Procedures, h) Alumni Survey Data, i) Alumni  
Survey Comments j) GE Assessment Committee Review, k) UWRF GE External  
Reviewer Report.

Specific recommendations for improving the general education and university  
requirements program at UWRF are found in four places: 1) Part IV of the Final  
Report, 2) Appendix D (to the Final Report) GEURC Procedures, 3) Assessment  
Committee Review of GE, and 4) UWRF GE External Reviewer Report. Text relating  
to the recommendations from each of these documents is attached to this report for  
the convenience to the reader. What follows is a brief summary of each set of  
recommendations.

Part IV of the Final Report & Appendix D GEURC Procedures

These GEURC recommendations are divided into two groups; those which appear to  
be non-controversial (and perhaps do not require Faculty Senate approval) and  
those which would possibly require Senate approval. The first category includes  
recommendations on:

a) establishing a webpage that clearly articulates the importance of university  
requirements to students,

b) formalizing detailed procedures of GEURC processes for: adding, changing  
and removing GE an UR requirements, revising the course approval process,  
evaluating course assessment reports, removing courses from the GE and UR  
listings, outlining future periodic reviews of the program,

c) identifying and sharing model assessment reports.

The second category include recommendations on:

a) making parts of the assessment reports available to students or the public,

b) procedures for enforcing timely submittal of assessment reports.
Assessment Committee Review of General Education

The Assessment Committee made the following recommendations for strengthening the general education and university requirement assessment plan and program review process.

a) Revise the plan to include items adopted by the Senate in Spring 2012 related to Program Prioritization and Program Audit and Review.

b) Use the assessment plan rubric adopted by the UWRF Senate in December 2012 as the general education assessment plan is reviewed and revised.

c) To the extent possible, common frames for assessing general education and university requirements goals/outcomes should be used.

d) Specify how the assessment process provides meaningfully direct assessment data related to general education and university requirements learning goals/outcomes.

e) Strengthen the plan process for how the campus knows if current performance in the goals/objectives is adequate.

f) Clearly state how assessment reports will be available to internal and external stakeholders.

g) Strengthen the process for ensuring that assessment reports are prepared and submitted in a timely fashion.

h) Review and revise time frames for collecting indirect assessment data.

i) If the campus adopts a general education survey as part of the graduation application process, then remove the undergraduate student five-year survey OR identify what additional information is needed.

UWRF GE External Reviewer Report

Dr. Robert Knight, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies at UW- Eau Claire provided this summary of recommendations at the end of his report.

a) Hire or appoint an Assessment Coordinator. Put together faculty development workshops designed to promote pedagogical change (teaching to outcomes with embedded assessment).

b) Examine the current 24 outcomes as a campus community and consider whether some could be combined.
c) Develop common rubrics for the agreed upon outcomes through campus conversations.

d) Grandfather in existing courses and review as the outcomes come up for consideration by the GE Committee (perhaps no more than two to three outcomes per year)

e) Hold an artifact read for those outcomes being reviewed each summer with the results given to the campus community. Use the results to modify courses, pedagogy, outcomes and rubrics as needed.

The timeline for the general education program review called for recommendations by the GEURC to the Faculty Senate by March 21, 2013. Clearly this goal has not been achieved by the committee. The second half of the spring semester is a very busy time for the committee as that is when it reviews assessment reports along with its normal business of considering new courses for general education or university requirement status. Currently we have seven courses in the queue. The committee is prepared to formally approve the non-controversial procedures that it has proposed (many of which have already been implemented) and should be able to provide specific motions on other recommendations for the Senate’s consideration by November of 2013.
IV. Recommendation for Improving Assessment Process

A. Changes Being Made to Improve the Assessment Process

The following problem areas have been identified and will be implemented by the GEURC in 2012-2013. The actions suggested below are deemed non-controversial and would require minimum Faculty Senate action (perhaps simple approval by the Executive Committee), if at all.

1) The need for the university requirements should be clearly articulated on a university webpage to allow students to understand the importance of these requirements. The General Education program is already adequately motivated, and that webpage could be used as a model.

Suggested Action: On the University Requirements webpage, http://www.uwrf.edu/Catalog/DegreeRequirements/UniversityRequirements.cfm, the following statement should be inserted:

The purpose of the UW-RF University Requirements is to value and understand individual differences in the context of American cultural diversity and to gain a global perspective on culture. American cultural diversity courses examine changing social identities and divergent beliefs of one or more racial or ethnic subgroup of American culture as defined by the University of Wisconsin-System. Course content must focus on the experience of one or more of the following four racial/ethnic groups in the United States: African American; Hispanic/Latino; Asian American; and/or American Indian. Courses designated GP will require students to examine subject matter from a global/international perspective. To the degree possible, both of these courses should also address the issues of gender and class. University of Wisconsin System requirements are also satisfied by these courses.

2) There is currently no documentation of GEURC processes, including the steps for approving new GE and UR courses, the steps for reviewing GE and UR courses that are up for review, and the steps for removing courses from the GE and UR listings. In addition, there is minimal documentation of the overall GEUR review process. Documentation would allow processes to be formalized and then streamlined, and would facilitate the transition from one chair to the next.
**Suggested Action:** Develop detailed documentation of GEURC processes, including
1. The steps for adding, changing, and removing GE and UR requirements.
2. The steps for approving new GE and UR courses.
3. The steps for evaluating GE and UR course assessment reports.
4. The steps for removing courses from the GE and UR listings.
5. The steps in the overall GEUR periodic (7-year) review process.

See Appendices D1-D5 for proposed documentation.

3) Identified course reports in each category that fulfill the committee’s standards and will be shared as model reports.

**Suggested Action:** The model course reports will be posted in the committee’s folder on the T:/Collaboration/General Education/ drive to allow faculty members to refer to them when constructing future reports. Since these reports do contain specific questions, they will not be shared with students.

**B. Next Steps in Assessment Process**

The problem areas and suggested actions below will be discussed by the GEURC and proposals forwarded to the Faculty Senate by March 21, 2013 when this final review and the outside evaluation are submitted to the Executive Committee.

1) General Education and University Requirement assessments are not currently available to students or the public. There is a desire to share the results without compromising the specific questions used by departments for assessment.

**Suggested Action:** While sharing the entire assessment report for each course would compromise specific questions and would not be feasible, sharing the evaluation reports from the GEUR committee would provide feedback about the success of learning outcomes to students and the general public. The consequences of posting reports with negative feedback should be considered before this suggestion is implemented.

2) Since delinquency in assessment reporting has increased over time, a procedure for enforcing timely submittal or assessing a penalty for late reports could be considered by the committee.

**Suggested Action:** The committee has had preliminary discussions about the issue, but a more formal approach may lead to more timely submissions. Suggestions included not considering new proposals from departments that have any outstanding late reports and removing the late report courses from the GE and/or UR listings. In Spring 2012, the committee chair contacted the dean of the deli
Appendix D1
Steps for Adding, Changing, or Removing General Education Requirements and University Requirements

1. An addition, revision, or removal narrative proposal related to one or more General Education and University Requirements and the related relevant GE and/or UR appendix are submitted to the General Education and University Requirements committee chair.

2. The proposal is placed on an upcoming GEURC (General Education and University Requirements Committee) meeting agenda and the proposer is notified of the date, time, and location of the meeting. Communication with the proposer indicates the person is expected to be able to provide a quick overview of and answer questions about the proposal, especially the relevant GE and/or UR appendix.

3. The proposal and relevant GE and/or UR appendix are distributed to the GEURC members along with the agenda or at about the same time.

4. At the meeting, GEUR committee members evaluate whether
   a. the proposal and appendix are meaningful and significant improvements to the current requirements. Additions and revisions should address unique learning outcomes that are not addressed by current requirements.

   b. the learning outcomes involved are crucial to the future of all students.

   b. the proposal should be considered as an independent item or in combination with other related changes.

   d. the proposal will increase or decrease time to degree for all or some students.

5. The GEURC votes to approve or disapprove the proposal.

6. If the proposal is disapproved, the Faculty Senate Chair and Secretary are notified of the reasons for the disapproval. If the proposal is approved, the chair notifies the Faculty Senate Chair and Secretary and forwards the proposal and the relevant GE and/or UR appendix. The proposal is placed in motion format on an upcoming Faculty Senate meeting agenda and the proposer is notified of the date, time, and location of the meeting. Communication with the proposer indicates the person is expected to be able to provide a quick overview of and answer questions about the proposal, especially the relevant GE and/or UR appendix. The Faculty Senate votes to approve or disapprove the new requirement motion.

7. The Chancellor either signs or does not sign the new requirement motion.

8. If the Chancellor signs the motion, a staff person in the Registrar’s Office ensures the new requirement is coded appropriately in eSIS, and the appropriate GE and/or UR web page is updated to include the new requirement and related objectives.
Appendix D2
Steps for Approving New General Education and University Requirement Courses

1. The course proposal and relevant GE and/or UR appendix are received from the University Curriculum committee.

2. The course is placed on an upcoming GEURC (General Education and University Requirements Committee) meeting agenda and the course proposer is notified of the date, time, and location of the meeting. Communication with the course proposer indicates the person is expected to be able to provide a quick overview of the course and answer questions about the course, especially the relevant GE and/or UR appendix.

3. The course proposal and relevant GE and/or UR appendix are distributed to the GEURC members along with the agenda or at about the same time.

4. At the meeting, GEUR committee members evaluate whether
   a. the course as a whole meets overall General Education criteria and specific GE Goal criteria.
   b. the assignments described in the appendix are relevant to the appendix learning outcomes that must be assessed.
   c. the appendix rubric used to assess the assignment measures the appendix learning outcomes and does not include other factors, for example, grammar and spelling, that are not related to the appendix learning outcomes. If necessary, remind the course proposer that the full assignment rubric used to grade the assignment is not relevant to the GEURC and that only appendix learning outcomes data will be needed in the course assessment report in the future.

Since each appendix represents a significant amount of assessment and documentation work for the course proposer, the GEURC strongly suggests that courses focus on one GE or UR goal, understanding that in some circumstances two GE and/or UR goals may be warranted. Attempting to meet three or more GE and UR goals in one course is almost always dilutive to the goals and unmanageable for assessment measurement and documentation. Multiple goal requests are still considered one goal at a time by the committee.

5. If the course meets the criteria in #4 and no revisions are necessary, then the GEURC votes to approve the course for GE and/or UR listing.

6. If the course does not yet meet the criteria in #4, but the course proposer has been given advice on how to change the appendix to meet the criteria, has agreed to make the changes, and the committee believes the revisions will be consistent with the criteria in
#4, the GEURC may vote to approve the course for GE and/or UR listing pending review of the updated documents by either the chair or the committee via email.

7. If the course does not yet meet the criteria in #4, and the committee believes that significant appendix revisions are necessary to meet the criteria in #4, the GEURC may vote to postpone the consideration of the course for GE and/or UR listing until the significant revision is received and considered at a future meeting. The GEURC may also vote to disapprove the course if the criteria in #4 are not met after a formative request.

8. If the course is approved for GE and/or UR listing, the chair notifies the Registrar’s Office using the official course proposal form with attached appendix. A staff person in the Registrar’s Office ensures the course is coded appropriately in eSIS, and the appropriate GE and/or UR web page is updated to include the new or revised course.
Appendix D3
Steps for Evaluating Existing GE And UR Course Assessment Reports

1. At the beginning of the academic year, the GEURC chair updates the “Report Format for Gen Ed” document with the correct chair email address and due date updated to November 1 of the current year.

2. The GEURC chair then consults the “GE Courses & Assessment Dates” file that had been updated at the end of the previous academic year. On or before the second Tuesday in September, the GEURC chair notifies the department chairs of all courses that are due for review in the current academic year. The email notification includes:
   a) a list of all department courses that are up for review.
   b) the updated “Report Format for Gen Ed” document is indicated as being attached to the email. Remember to attach the document!
   c) either a link to the model report(s) for each category the department will review that year or the model report itself is attached. Remember to include the link or attach the document!

3. Submitted reports are posted to the appropriate folder (either category and then academic year or academic year and then category, depending on what is determined to be most efficient) on T:/Collaborations/General Education folder.

4. The GEURC sends reminders to department chairs that still have reports outstanding on the second Tuesday in October.

5. On the first Tuesday after November 1, the GEURC sends reminders to department chairs that still have reports outstanding and requests an estimated date of completion. Reminders are then sent the first Tuesday of the month until the report is submitted.

6. If the report is not submitted by December 1, the College Dean of the delinquent department is notified and cc:ed on every first Tuesday reminder until the report is submitted. One possible consequence would be to not permit any new courses in the general education or university requirement category from a department which currently has delinquent reports.

7. At the beginning of the fall semester, the GEURC divides the committee into subcommittees of two, or at most three, and assigns GEUR categories to each subcommittee, ensuring that approximately the same number of reports will be read by each subcommittee.

8. The subcommittee assignments and location of the course assessment reports are shared with the committee on or before the second Tuesday in November. The following instructions are also shared:
Procedures for the teams to evaluate course assessment reports.

a. The reports are scanned by the teams by the end of the Fall semester to ensure essential components are included. The checklist on the GEUR Assessment Report Format will facilitate this process.

b. The reports should be viewed with an eye toward: collected data, data analysis, and changes in the course considered upon reflecting on the data. These criteria and the related checklist are found in the document “Report Format for Gen Ed” titled General Education and University Requirements Assessment Report Format that all course reports should be following. The rubric for evaluating assessment reports developed in 2008 should be used only as an aid.

c. Per the instructions in the “Report Format for Gen Ed” document, the complete report should have 2-3 page narrative which describes: the assessments, how well students achieved the outcomes, summary of data, data analysis, course response to assessment, and how consistency in assessment was assured for multi-section courses. Attached to the narrative should be: approved GE appendix with rubrics, sample assignments and/or test questions, and course syllabus.

d. If the assessment report is missing information, the team will report back to the report writer and, if necessary, the GEURC chair.

e. Each team will be responsible for writing an evaluation paragraph summarizing the team’s findings for each course assessment report and recommending a committee action. The location of past evaluation paragraphs should be shared. Common recommendations include:
   i. The recommendation is to re-approve the course for 5 years.
   ii. Due to the deficiencies described previously, the recommendation is to re-approve the course for 2 years.
   iii. Due to the ongoing deficiencies described previously, stretching over several years, the team recommends the course be removed from GEUR.

f. At this stage in the new general education program, the evaluation paragraphs should have a formative tone, seeking to improve on the quality of the assessment instrument or report.

g. Evaluation paragraphs for all submitted course assessment reports are due by the Tuesday following Spring Break.

9. Submitted evaluation paragraphs are posted to the appropriate folder (either category and then academic year or academic year and then category, depending on what is determined to be most efficient) on the T:/Collaborations/General Education folder.

10. The GEURC sends reminders to subcommittees that still have paragraphs outstanding on all following second Tuesdays in February and March.
11. If the subcommittee paragraphs are not submitted by the Tuesday after Spring Break, a reminder is sent to the subcommittee every first Tuesday until the paragraphs are submitted.

12. By the beginning of February, the GEURC chair starts scheduling individual course evaluation paragraph discussions, followed by committee action to re-approve the course for five years, to re-approve the course for two-to-four years, or to disapprove and remove the course from the GE and/or UR listing. All committee action must be completed by the end of the last week of class.

13. Following the final meeting, the GEURC chair updates “GE Courses & Assessment Dates” file for all committee actions in the current year and to indicate when the courses will next be reviewed.
Appendix D4  
Steps for Removing Courses from the GE and UR Listings

1. Departments that wish to remove a course from the GE and/or UR listings without making any other significant changes to the course file an updated first page of the course proposal form with the General Education and University Requirements Committee (GEURC) chair along with an undergraduate curriculum/course transmittal form signed by the department chair. If significant changes are made to the course, the usual course change procedures apply.

2. The removal of the course from the GE and/or UR listings is placed as a consent agenda item on an upcoming GEURC agenda. Unless a committee member requests that the item be removed from the consent agenda for discussion, the item is passed as the consent agenda is passed. The related documents are signed by the GEURC chair and transmitted to the Registrar’s Office.

3. The GEURC chair works with the Registrar’s Office to ensure the GE and/or UR indicators are removed from the eSIS course description and the course is removed from the GE and/or UR listings webpage.
Appendix D5
General Education Periodic (7-Year) Review Timeline

Action Steps

1. An outside evaluator is identified by the joint work of the Gen. Ed. Committee and the Assessment Committee, assisted perhaps by the provost’s office, by October 30, and invited to campus for a visit in February.

2. General Education surveys are sent by the end of September.

3. General Education survey responses are summarized by the Survey Research Center by October 30, and provided to the General Education chair in time to incorporate the results into the December 1 Report for the outside evaluator.

4. The Assessment Committee Chair, prior to or concurrent with Step 2 immediately above, communicates any process improvement ideas to the GEURC chair/subcommittee.

5. The GEURC chair/subcommittee completes a draft written report for the external evaluator by December 1.

6. A program review report is approved by the Gen. Ed. Committee no later than January 23. This report is forwarded simultaneously to the outside evaluator, APP, and to the Assessment Committee.

7. Within two weeks of receipt of the Gen. Ed. Report, the Assessment Committee forwards comments to AP&P. (See the Handbook as to the duties of the Assessment Committee.)

8. February: visit and report by the outside evaluator.

9. Gen. Ed. makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate concerning the structure of Gen. Ed. If any are warranted as a result of the review (including both the Gen. Ed. Committee’s findings and the outside evaluator’s report as well as any comments by the Assessment Committee and APP) by March 21.
Assessment Committee Review of General Education

Joy Benson, chair of the Assessment Committee including these recommendations in her committee’s February 6, 2013 report.

Assessment Plan: The following observations and recommendations related to the general education assessment plan are presented to strength the process of assessment.

- Revise the plan to include items adopted by the Senate in Spring 2012 related to Program Prioritization and Program Audit and Review. Specifically:
  - Include new or show how current goals/outcomes are yoked to UWRF strategic initiatives and goals.
  - Identify and show how general education out-of-classroom learning opportunities impact general education/university requirement goals/outcomes and serve the needs of external stakeholders.

- Use the assessment plan rubric adopted by the UWRF Senate in December 2012 as the general education assessment plan is reviewed and revised. Make sure that narrative is in the appropriate sections of the assessment plan. A copy is attached.

- Include the general education/university requirement goals/outcomes and sub-goals/outcomes in the plan narrative. Providing the web-page link is OK as support but should not replace the text in the plan.

- The same applies to other plan sections where the web-link is used exclusively. In some cases [course listings] examples should be in the plan with the web-link included for the complete listing.

- If used, common direct assessment feedback questions or rubrics need to be included in the plan. It was noted that course-embedded is the direct assessment method used. The committee recommends that multiple sections of the same course use the same evaluation criteria, if this is not already in place. To the extent possible, common frames for assessing general education and university requirements goals/outcomes should be used. The committee noted that there are a lot of courses associated each goal/outcome and that without some common assessment frame the direct and indirect findings may not be as effective as they could be in identifying performance gaps or needed change in the goals/outcomes.

- It is noted in the plan that individual programs need to have their assessment tools approved. The same should be noted for the assessment process and how it provides meaningfully direct assessment
data related to the general education and campus requirement learning goals/outcomes.

- Strengthen the plan process for how the campus knows if current performance in the goals/objectives is adequate, if the current general education/university requirement goals/objectives are appropriate, if the assessment process itself is effective or needs to be changed, and how performance is to be enhanced in areas where it is deficient.

- Clearly state how assessment plans and assessment report findings/enhancement will be made available to internal and external stakeholders.

- Strengthen the process for ensuring that assessment reports are prepared consistent with the 1/5 every year design in the plan. While developmental feedback is valuable, may want to eliminate re-writes and have a process for follow-up when reports are not received.

- Recommend changes to the indirect measures:
  
  o Review and revise [if needed] time frames for collecting indirect assessment data. Adhere to whatever time frame is identified.
  
  o If the campus adopts a general education survey as part of the graduation application process, then remove the undergraduate student 5-year survey OR clearly identify what information it would provide that the graduate application survey feedback does not provide.
  
  o As they are finalized, indirect survey tools should be included in the plan. [The current plans states that the surveys are currently under construction].
Excerpted from Dr. Robert Knight's External Reviewer's Report

Summary of Evaluation and Recommendations -

Changing a General Education system often involves changing a campus culture. UW-River Falls is at a unique place in that it has made significant strides towards an outcomes-based system and has taught within that model for a decade. Rather than wholesale change, UW – River Falls needs to refine the program by focusing on the outcomes and their campus-wide assessment. In short, the campus should consider the following steps:

1. Hire or appoint an Assessment Coordinator. Put together faculty development workshops designed to promote pedagogical change (teaching to outcomes with embedded assessment).

2. Examine the current 24 outcomes as a campus community and consider whether some could be combined.

3. Develop common rubrics for the agreed upon outcomes through campus conversations.

4. Grandfather in existing courses and review as the outcomes come up for consideration by the GE Committee (perhaps no more than two to three outcomes per year).

5. Hold an artifact read for those outcomes being reviewed each summer with the results given to the campus community. Use the results to modify courses, pedagogy, outcomes and rubrics as needed.

These steps will result in a GE program with campus buy in. A GE program can be a signature program for a campus. This move to an outcomes based system with robust assessment that closes the loop will not only enable the campus to demonstrate to the HLC that UW-River Falls has an assessment program in place, but will also provide a method to enhance pedagogy throughout the campus.

Once this pedagogical method coupled with real assessment of student learning is established, it is likely that department will also begin to look at their methods and, perhaps, adapt this outlook to their content areas. While this won’t be an instant fix, these steps could result in a campus culture change.