Committee on Courses and General Education
Annual Report 2020-2021

To the Faculty Legislature, Santa Barbara Division:

Executive Summary

Purpose (per Bylaw 92): To authorize, supervise, and regulate all undergraduate courses and monitor the General Education Program.

Issues of General Concern to Faculty:

1. CCGE approved 27 General Education (GE) course proposals.
2. CCGE approved 220 associate appointment proposals.
3. CCGE considered 12 proposals to create or renew online courses.

CCGE held 15 regularly scheduled 90-minute meetings during the 2020-21 academic year and consulted as needed with faculty executive committees, academic deans, and other campus administrators. The Committee also benefited from the participation of regular consultants from the Office of the Registrar, the College of Letters and Science Advising office, and the College of Engineering Advising office. The Chair of CCGE met periodically with the Chair of the Undergraduate Council to discuss shared undergraduate concerns.

Recurring Business

Course Requests

CCGE has final approval authority over the establishment, modification, and discontinuation of all undergraduate courses. Individual members are delegated the authority to review and act on course requests via the Master Course Approval (MCA) System, and forward any requests about which they are uncertain for full committee review and final action by the Committee Chair. Several hundred requests are reviewed each year

CCGE approved 10 online course proposals, all of which were approved for a period of two years. The offering departments may request renewed approval, based on assessment of the effectiveness of the initial offerings. CCGE approved the renewal of 2 online course proposals in perpetuity.

The Committee approved 27 General Education course proposals, denied 1 proposal, and asked for more information from 1 proposal. CCGE also approved 1 course for the UC-wide American History and Institutions requirement.

CCGE reviewed 1 proposal to re-unit an existing undergraduate course.

Associate Appointment Proposals

CCGE reviewed 220 Associate appointment proposals. CCGE approved all of the appointment proposals. In several instances, the Committee Chair contacted the chair of the proposing department to discuss concerns about below-average performance in previous teaching assignments. In some cases, the
Committee Chair requested additional evidence of the candidate’s qualifications and/or recommended individual faculty mentoring.

**Campus Proposals and Initiatives**

*Chemistry and Biochemistry - Proposal for Writing Requirement Clause Retraction*
CCGE considered a proposal from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry requesting that the clause “lab reports from chemistry courses will not be considered” be removed from the Writing Requirement Credit Information Sheet. By removing the clause, lab courses offered by the department would be eligible for the Special Subject Writing general education requirement. The Committee unanimously approved the proposal and strongly urged the department to submit general education course proposals for all applicable lab courses.

*Phase One Report of the Chancellor’s Task Force on Enrollment Strategy*
CCGE reviewed the Enrollment Task Force Report, which addressed the issue of impacted majors at UCSB and other campus constraints. CCGE recommended that the campus ensure adequate offering and access to General Education courses for students. The Committee also suggested that the Task Force consider ways to incentivize the development of additional GE courses. CCGE acknowledged the need for enhancements to campus advising resources and supports steps being taken to increase coordination among all campus advising units. CCGE discussed its role in the course approval process, with special attention to online course proposals. The Committee determined that it would be appropriate to revisit the new online course proposal process and consider whether the process could be streamlined. However, it was highlighted that the current guidelines were put in place to promote close examination and ensure that there is a pedagogical advantage to offering the course in an online format. CCGE does not believe that an increased number of online courses will ultimately solve the current impaction issues. Members also voiced concern that an increase in lecturer appointments could promote a two-tier system of faculty. The Committee noted that an expansion of summer sessions could end up being less accessible to students who must work in order to support themselves. Lastly, CCGE was surprised to see little consideration given to thinking about the enrollment problem in terms of its impact on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Members recommended that any proposed changes going forward for implementation be reviewed in terms of EDIA impact.

*Priority Registration Reform*
CCGE considered a proposal for priority registration reform submitted by Associate Vice Chancellor Jeffrey Stopple and Vice Chancellor Belinda Robnett. The proposal called for the following changes effective Fall quarter 2021:

1. Priority registration will only apply to the first registration pass time.
2. Students matriculating to UCSB as College of Letters & Science Honors and College of Engineering Honors, and continuing students joining those programs will no longer have priority registration. Honors students who belong to a state-mandated priority registration group will retain their registration privileges.
3. Regents Scholars will no longer automatically be awarded priority registration. Regent Scholars who belong to a state-mandated priority registration group will retain their registration privileges.
4. Continuing College of Letters & Science Honors, College of Engineering Honors, and Regents Scholars will retain their priority registration privileges as long as they remain in that designation.
5. Students entering the College of Creative Studies will be granted a version of priority registration analogous to that of returning EAP students.
Members were largely in favor of the report’s recommendations to significantly scale back UCSB’s use of priority registration. They agreed that the current system is inequitable and disproportionately disadvantages underrepresented and first-generation students. However, there was some concern among members that the proposed recommendations would disincentivize talented students from choosing to attend UCSB. The Committee’s vote to approve the priority registration reform was passed with 8 in favor and 1 abstention.

Proposal for Modification to General Education (GE) Program for the College of Engineering
CCGE considered a proposal from the College of Engineering to significantly expand the list of applicable courses that can be used to fulfill the Area A2-English Reading and Composition general education requirement. The Committee fully supported the request and agreed that the change would help reduce enrollment and graduation issues for College of Engineering undergraduate students. CCGE voted unanimously to approve the proposed modification effective Fall quarter 2021. Per the College’s request, the modification also retroactively applied to students pursuing degree programs between the 2015-16 and 2020-2021 catalog years.

GEOG W 115B Proposal
CCGE was asked by the College of Letters and Science Faculty Executive Committee to comment on the request to establish GEOG W 115B, a new hybrid course. The L&S FEC noted two significant concerns with the proposal:
1. The instructor’s living situation was listed as a reason for the lecture portion of the course being offered in an online format.
2. While the instructor would teach remotely the teaching assistants would be responsible for the in-person portion of instruction. This could place an undue burden on them.

The Committee agreed that the motive for creating an online course is an important factor that should be considered. Based on the information provided, members called into question the benefit of creating a hybrid version of GEOG 115B. Members were largely under the impression that the request was being made to accommodate an instructor’s particular situation rather than to address a pedagogical issue. CCGE does not feel that the online course approval process should be viewed as an accommodation system.

The Committee also noted concerns about requiring graduate students to teach in-person while the instructor would teach in a fully remote capacity. Chair King highlighted that recent discussions have shown that graduate students have had major workload (and expense) issues associated with instruction during the past year. Considering that graduate student concerns about equity and compensation were already coming to a head prior to the beginning of the pandemic period, CCGE feels that UCSB governing bodies should be particularly careful to give close attention to their issues.

Ultimately, CCGE did not find the proposal acceptable and stated that a more thorough assessment by the department should be conducted. CCGE was also reluctant to set a precedent in which it is approving online courses that follow a model of online distance learning in an emergency situation.

Compliance with the Commencement of Academic Activity regulation for Title IV Financial Aid
CCGE reviewed a request from an Office of the Registrar and Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships workgroup regarding compliance with the Title IV financial aid regulations. The regulations state that institutions must document that students commenced academic activity in their courses early in the term and adjust financial aid eligibility for those that do not meet the requirements. Therefore, UCOP has requested that all campuses develop a plan that will comply with these financial aid regulations. The report provided examples of models currently being used by UC Davis and UC Merced. The Committee supported the workgroup’s recommendation to implement a system following the model used at UC
Davis, which would require students to complete a low-stakes assignment in GOLD by the census date for each of their courses.

CCGE also took the opportunity to express their support for the creation of a Senate regulation that would require a syllabus be provided in every UCSB course. This would allow the compliance process to be tied to students completing a syllabus assignment for each of their courses. CCGE felt that this type of change would make the task more strongly tied to a true academic assignment.

Student Petition Concerning the European Traditions Requirement
CCGE considered a student petition to reimagine the European Traditions Special Subject Area requirement. The proposal calls for the European Traditions requirement to be absorbed by the current World Cultures Special Subject requirement. The Committee submitted a response to UgC that suggested an amendment to the wording of the proposed requirement. However, it was ultimately determined that the proposal was incomplete as it was missing memos from departments that house courses approved for the European Traditions requirement. Therefore, CCGE will revisit the request during the 2021-22 academic year.

Systemwide Issues

Along with other Senate councils and committees, members of CCGE were invited to review materials pertaining to the following systemwide issues:

1. Systemwide Review of Proposed Curtailment Program
2. Systemwide Review of the Online Undergraduate Degree Task Force Report
3. Innovative Learning Technology Initiative - Recommendations for Future State
4. Systemwide Review of Proposed Revision of Senate Regulation 610, Defining Residency

Committee on Courses and General Education Members

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