

Committee on General Studies  
Annual Report, Academic year 2018-2019

*Membership:*

Elizabeth Pollock	Chair
John O'Hara	Vice-chair, GEN Convener, union rep
Christine Ferri	Freshman Seminar Program
Marcy Isabella	GAH Convener
Judy Vogel	GIS Convener
Wondi Geremew	GNM Convener
Manish Madan	GSS Convener
Rain Ross	ARHU
John Pearlstein	BUSN
Shelly Meyers	EDUC
Kerri Sowers	HLTH
David Lechner	Library

*Ex Officio Members*

Robert Gregg	Dean of General Studies
Carra Hood	Associate Provost, provost designee

2018-2019 Committee Activities

The General Studies committee met four times during the past academic year. The following items were discussed:

- The conversation on assessment of G-courses for Middle States last year continued. In fall 2019, an initial assessment plan will be implemented. The assessment plan will collect data from all G categories at all levels, using discursive, survey-based, and standardized test-based instruments. Participation of faculty is being solicited by conveners in each category. Over time, we will collect data on related to learning goals based on General Studies, ELOs and IDEA objectives. The goal is to look at trends and how each category helps students achieve a well-rounded, liberal arts education. This will also help determine whether or not there are aspects of a liberal arts curriculum that are currently not being well served by General Studies and inform how we could address gaps found, if any. The assessment plan is being led by Carra Hood; her ELO assessment will be used as part of the General Studies assessment.
- All General Studies courses will now use a common CIP code for student evaluations of teaching through IDEA, 240199 – Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, General. The old four-digit CIP codes are no longer relevant now that we have moved away from the IDEA Legacy forms and to the newer IDEA Campus Labs platform. The use of a single CIP code for all G-courses will more properly place these courses for comparison purposes as faculty will no longer be having the comparison set be courses intended for students majoring in the field most related to the course

content. The new course proposal will be up-dated to remove the option of listing a CIP code, a part of the form faculty rarely completed anyway.

- A conversation was had as to whether or not and how independent study and internship courses may be assigned G-acronyms instead of being listed as program-based courses. When Michael Rodriguez presented the idea to expand the Washington Internship program to 16 credits, using a G-acronym for an independent study, the question arose as to the process for approving such G courses. While Michael goes out of his way to demonstrate the General Studies value of his independent study design, by consulting with the Dean and reviewing a plan written by the student, ultimately this exception needs only to be approved by the Dean. The General Studies committee is working with GENS to involve the conveners in this process. In general, the General Studies committee is concerned about the ways in which programs, minors, concentrations, and other special programs, utilize the G curriculum. We need to ensure that students are getting the broad-based, interdisciplinary liberal arts education at our core mission. We do know that General Studies serves a lot of specialized programs, and that might be appropriate if those programs' courses are suitable to their G category and truly open to the diverse body of General Studies students of various backgrounds and interests, of various majors, and at different levels of study. We would like to collect data on G courses and their populations by major, minor, level, etc., and on the number and type of independent studies and internships listed as G courses. This data will help the committee, and more specifically the convenors, with their oversight role and help to understand the G curriculum in a more nuanced way as we head into strategic planning.
- Christine Ferri met with the committee to clarify Freshman Seminar courses and their approval process. There has been some confusion among faculty, who occasionally either think that getting a course approved as a G-course is sufficient to getting it approved as a freshman seminar or think that all they need is approval to teach something as a freshman seminar without the additional step of having the course approved as a G-course. The General Studies Agreement form is clear that neither of these are true, courses must be approved through both processes.