March 5, 2015

Martin A. Berger, Acting Dean
Arts Division

Re: CEP General Education Requirement Changes Request

Dear Martin:

At various meetings this year and last year, CEP discussed courses in various departments that could potentially carry two general education designations; the content of these courses is such that more than one GE could apply to the course. In these cases, students would be able to choose which GE designation the course would satisfy on their transcripts. The Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections determined that SCR 10.2.3.1 would allow courses to bear two GE designations, though students would only be able to receive one GE.

Members agreed with Dean Berger that the intellectual and disciplinary nature of these courses naturally spans several GE designations, and that it would be unreasonable to make the instructors of these courses choose which GE should be associated with their course. Members were less inclined, however, to accept arguments for courses bearing multiple GE designations on the grounds of increasing enrollments.

The committee also discussed other potential consequences of such a change. Members were unsure whether allowing courses to bear multiple GEs would make students more or less likely to take courses outside of their field of study; at least one goal of having a GE curriculum is to encourage students to get a broad education, and it is unclear if courses that bear multiple GE designations would increase or decrease the breadth of a student's education at UCSC.

Members also considered how this issue will be addressed in practical terms: would students decide which GE they are fulfilling when enrolling, and if so, how would they do this? Could this process be done automatically, such that whichever GE was needed would be entered onto their transcript? The committee was unable to come up with clear answers to these questions, and feared that these courses may greatly increase workload at the level of the department, the Registrar’s office, or the Senate office.

While, on the balance, the arguments in favor of allowing courses to bear more than one GE were compelling, CEP determined that it would be most prudent for some small number of multiple-GE courses to be proposed as a pilot project. The GE designation for these courses could be handled as “special cases,” but the committee hopes that keeping the number of such courses low for the time being would limit the amount of increased workload for staff, and would also encourage departments to only propose courses for this pilot that clearly merited bearing more than one GE designation.
CEP invites you to propose three or four classes that will bear multiple GEs for this pilot project. The committee will consider these cases and determine a mechanism that allows students to choose which GE credit that class will carry. After these classes have run, the committee would like to see a report on that compares the student population of these courses to other GE-bearing courses in the Arts Division: do these courses have more students from within their department or division than courses that bear only one GE, or do they have more students from the outside?

If you have any questions, please contact me at tamkun@ucsc.edu or CEP analysts Susanna Wrangell at swrangel@ucsc.edu and Barak Krakauer at bkrakaue@ucsc.edu.

Sincerely,

John Tamkun, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Chief of Staff Lucas