

Preamble

The following statement was adopted by ACC and CUE to reflect the values of the Western community and our vision for general education:

Western believes that liberal education enables people to lead fuller and more interesting lives, to perceive and to understand more of the world around and within themselves, and to participate more intelligently, sensitively, and deliberately in shaping that world. This belief reflects a long tradition in American higher education. In this tradition, the bachelor's degree includes specialized study, the major, together with study over a range of human inquiry, expression and accomplishment. Broadly, the liberal education component of a bachelor's degree deals with issues of truth and falsity, with expressions of what is possible for humans to do and be, with things that bear on choices that we make about what in life we consider important. This broader study helps people gain perspective on who they are and what they do in the world.

The CUE concluded in 2012 that (1) the revisions to Western's general education curriculum implemented in fall 2005 "had limited impact on clarifying the connection between the GURs and a liberal arts and sciences education or on creating more coherence across the GURs¹ and (2) it was unclear if the curriculum was either fulfilling the vision for liberal education articulated above or meeting the goals that faculty had previously established for the GUR program.

These conclusions led the CUE to create the WSGE Task Force, which the ACC and Faculty Senate approved. The Task Force was charged with exploring and gauging the desire of various Western constituents to engage in structural reform of the GUR program.

From the extensive information-gathering and discussion that followed, a significant plurality of faculty members expressed their reluctance, even unwillingness, to decide whether structural reform was desirable, absent specific proposals to consider. Hence, the Faculty Senate has now recommended creating a new task force charged to develop proposals to improve Western's GUR program.

Task Force Charge

The Task Force will provide for the university community's consideration three options for improving the GUR program. One of the options will involve minimal adjustments to the structure and goals of the current GUR program.

¹ White Paper, p. 1.

Deadline and meeting schedule

The Task Force shall complete its task by the end of winter quarter 2016. Its meetings, scheduled for Wednesdays from 4-5:30 pm, shall begin as soon as possible.

Task Force Membership

The Task Force will include faculty representing the following colleges and disciplines:

- (2) Natural Sciences
- (1) Social Sciences
- (1) Humanities
- (1) Fine and Performing Arts
- (1) Business and Economics
- (1) Environment
- (1) Education
- (1) Libraries
- (1) Fairhaven

The Task Force will include three students.

The Task Force shall include at least one faculty (preferably from the list above) representing:

- ACC
- CUE
- Faculty Senate

The Task Force shall include faculty (preferably from the list above) representing:

- (2) NTT faculty who teach GURs
- (1) Expertise in Higher Education

The Task Force shall include the following (non-voting) Advisory Members:

- Brent Carbajal, Provost
- Steve VanderStaay, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
- John Purdie, Director of Residence Life
- One representative from the Registrar's Office

Considerations

The Task Force should note that, although its study and discussion of improving the GUR program may implicate the associated issues below to consider, its charge **does not include** settling any of these issues:

- Implementation of any of the options to improve the GUR program

- Resources needed to implement any of the options
- Assessment of any of the options
- Timeline of any implementation
- Process by which the university community will choose an option
- How the information will be delivered to the campus community
 - Accreditation of any college or of the university as a whole
 - Issues involving specific "bottleneck" courses
 - Issues involving the university's Writing Proficiency requirement
 - Issues involving academic advising

The ACC and Faculty Senate assume ultimate responsibility for the above list of considerations. The Task Force shall focus on identifying options to improve the GUR program that reflect the values of the Western community and make liberal arts and sciences education an integral part of the Western experience.

Attachments

- Statements published in WWU documents that communicate the value of liberal arts and sciences education and GURs
- Comparisons of GUR programs at peer universities
- WSGE Task Force Final Report
- Faculty Senate Summary of WSGE Report
- GUR Competencies
- LEAP Resources and Outcomes