General Education Council (GEC) Annual Report 2012-2013

According to Senate Resolution 35-2, the mandate of the General Education Council (GEC) is to “promote excellence in general education at UIS by facilitating development approval and evaluation of courses; developing policies and rules for implementation of the curriculum; and recommending to the Undergraduate Council and the Campus Senate policy changes of the general education curriculum.”

The Campus Senate Bylaws require that the General Education Council submit a report about its activities to the Undergraduate Council and the Campus Senate each year.

During AY 2012-2013, Stephen Schnebly chaired GEC.

2012-13 GEC members were:

Samia Ahmad  Harshavardhan Bapat  Patricia Byrnes
Donna Bussell  Lan Dong  Dorothy Hemmo
Karen Moranski  John Martin  Tung Nguyen
Richard Gilman-Opalsky  Deb Ply  Peter Shapinsky
Pinky Wassenberg

Between 9/10/12 and 5/13/13, GEC convened 14 times. During this period, GEC accomplished the following:

- GEC reviewed a total of 34 course proposals. The council approved 27 of these courses (several were approved after the council requested and received minor revisions). Two courses were withdrawn, and two courses were tabled pending revision. Three course proposals were denied.

- GEC reviewed five student petitions to use transfer credit for UIS General Education/ECCE. The council approved three of these petitions and denied two.

- GEC reviewed one student petition to use transfer credit to satisfy the UIS Comparative Societies/Humanities requirement. The council approved this petition and will review future petitions of this sort on a case by case basis.

- All GEC members completed the required Open Meetings Act training.

- In order to better fit the number of credit hours with the number of service hours required (and to be consistent with U.S. Communities and Global Awareness course criteria), GEC altered the Engagement Experience course criteria so that Engagement Experience courses can now be either 3 or 4 credit hours.

- GEC is working to revise the course criteria for both U.S. Communities and Global Awareness ECCE courses. These revisions will not alter the substance of these ECCE course categories, but instead are aimed clarifying and simplifying the stated course
criteria. Revised criteria for U.S. Communities courses are expected by the end of fall 2013.

- GEC discussed and debated the policy of accepting 200-level courses as ECCE. The general view of the council is that ECCE coursework should be upper-division. The council continues to gather information on the history and utility of 200-level ECCE coursework and will address this issue further in the upcoming academic year.

- GEC reviewed and commented on the new electronic “UIS New Course Approval and Existing Course Change Form.” The council will continue to be involved in devising and reviewing future versions of electronic course forms.

- In response to a proposal to count credit from a Freshman Seminar course towards a department’s minor, GEC amended the category overview for Freshman Seminar courses to clearly state that such courses should not be used to meet the requirements for an academic major or minor. Due to the unique nature of the Freshman Seminar - and the specific function that it serves in the UIS General Education Curriculum - GEC does not feel that Freshman Seminar courses should be used to fulfill requirements for a major or a minor. A memo outlining this issue has been forwarded to Undergraduate Council (UGC).

- GEC formed a sub-committee to examine how foreign language courses might be used to fulfill requirements of the UIS General Education Curriculum. This sub-committee, which was comprised of Stephen Schnebly, Peter Shapinsky, and John Martin, met with various individuals who are/were closely associated with the foreign languages program at UIS (e.g., Keith Burton, Maximiliano Sanchez, and Tena Helton). The purpose of these meetings was to gather information and to explore creative ways to use foreign language coursework to meet UIS General Education requirements. Based on what was learned, the council has suggested that the Foreign Languages Program submit the first course of the newly formed Spanish Minor for approval as an ECCE Global Awareness course. The work of the sub-committee is on-going.

### Tentative GEC Agenda for AY 2013-2014

- Continue to review course proposals and student petitions.

- Continue the work of the foreign languages sub-committee.

- Continue to clarify and simplify Gen. Ed./ECCE course approval criteria.

- Take preliminary steps to assess the General Education and ECCE Curricula.

- Continue discussions/data gathering on the current policy of allowing 200-level ECCE coursework.