

General Studies Program Governance

I. General Studies Council

The General Studies Council (GSC) follows the guiding principle that students' academic interests are foremost in all deliberations and decisions.

A. Composition of the GSC

1. Voting Members

- Terms begin at the end of spring semester (after the last spring semester meeting of the GSC).
- Nominees should make provisions in their schedules to be able to attend Council meetings, which are typically scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the months during the academic year.
- Three tenured faculty members (from different departments) from each undergraduate College
 - Nomination process determined by the individual Colleges; two nominees from each College, selection made by SVCASA in consultation with the Director of General Studies
 - Three-year staggered terms
 - Faculty members finishing a complete three year term may succeed themselves only once (beginning 2003)
- One tenured faculty member from the Library
 - Nomination process determined by the Library; two nominees from the Library, selection made by SVCASA in consultation with the Director of General Studies
 - Three-year term
 - Faculty members may succeed themselves only once

2. Non-voting Members

- Two junior or senior students from different undergraduate Colleges
 - Nominated by Student Senate, two per position, selection made by the SVCASA
 - Rotated among the four Colleges as determined by the SVCASA
 - One-year term
 - Votes will be recorded in the minutes but will not count toward approval of actions (UN Board of Regents model)
- All *Ex Officio* Members
 - Director of General Studies (Chair of GSC)
 - Registrar or representative of the Registrar's Office

- Director of Assessment or representative of the Assessment Office
 - Director of Academic Advising
 - B. Council Operations
 1. Agenda to be published to campus via e-mail one week in advance of the meeting
 2. Quorum is defined as 2/3 of the voting members (9 voting members)
 3. Voting procedures
 - Actions are approved by a simple majority of the voting members in attendance, but the majority must include votes of faculty from at least three different Colleges (BT, ED, FAH, NSS)
 - The Director or a council member may request a ballot vote. Ballot will be used with consensus of council.
 - Tie votes result in the failure of the motion or action
 4. Roberts Rules of Order

Attendance: only 3 absences per academic year permitted
 5. Proposed changes to this Governance Document are approved by majority vote of the GSC and distributed for campus wide comment. Changes may then be made by the GSC, and the proposal is forwarded to the SVCASA for final approval.
- II. Duties of GSC
 - A. Develop procedures for evaluating GS courses
 - B. Approving GS course proposals
 - C. Assessment of student achievement and other aspects of GS program
 - D. Establishing and reviewing GS waiver mechanisms
 - E. Regularly reviewing GS program structure and objectives
 - F. Reporting to SVCASA and Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee
 - G. Developing standards and procedures for recognizing outstanding GS faculty
- III. Duties of Director of General Studies
 - A. Chair of GSC
 - B. Coordinating GS offerings with Deans and Chairs
 - C. Facilitating development of GS offerings
 - D. Facilitating assessment of GS program
 - E. Reporting on behalf of GSC to SVCASA, Faculty Senate and other interested parties

F. Provide advance notice to the campus by e-mail of the agendas and to solicit comment on agenda items by interested parties

G. Reports of GSC actions

1. Minutes will be kept of all GSC meetings
2. Copies of minutes will regularly be distributed to the following interested parties:
 - GSC members
 - Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
 - Faculty Senate
 - University Archives

IV. Student Appeals

A. The Registrar's Office determines and verifies whether General Studies requirements have been met by individual students.

B. Students wishing to appeal a decision by the Registrar must submit a written request to the Director of General Studies; the Director is empowered by the GSC to make a decision regarding the student appeal.

1. The request for a review of the Registrar's decision should be accompanied by supportive materials and specific course descriptions that support the student's contention.
2. The request should be submitted prior to the beginning of the semester in which that student is scheduled to graduate.

C. The Director of General Studies may elect to place the student's appeal on the agenda of the next meeting of the GSC for action, either to approve or deny the request.

D. The student may appeal the Director's decision by submitting a written request to the Director for a GSC review of the student's appeal request. Upon receipt of the request, the Director will place the appeal on the agenda of the next meeting of the GSC for action, either to approve or deny the request.

E. The student may appeal the decision of the GSC by submitting a written request to the SVCASA to review the decision. The Director of General Studies will then forward the decision of the Council to the SVCASA.

V. Approval of Courses

The GSC is the final recommending body prior to final approval by the SVCASA.

The General Studies Program must respond to changing circumstances yet maintain sufficient stability that students may complete the program without undue confusion. To accommodate change, the GSC will consider the submission of new courses under the following circumstances.

- A. Procedure for submitting courses for consideration as new General Studies courses, and/or petitioning to alter the category to which an existing GS course is assigned

1. The course must be an active UNK offering.
 2. The author of the course proposal must complete the GSC Course Approval Form **and checklist** (on the GS website) providing a written explicit description of the course detailing how it meets the established General Studies criteria at both the program and category level. The proposal must include the following:
 - Evidence that student objectives are consistent with program and category criteria
 - Description of the teaching strategies employed
 - Plan for assessment of student outcomes compatible with the criteria
 - Plan for assessment of the course's achievement of the criteria
 - Detailed and complete sample syllabus
 3. Prior to submission to the GSC, evidence of support must be obtained from:
 - The Department chair and/or program director submitting the proposal. If the program is housed in a department with a chair, then the proposal must come from the Department chair.
 - The College Academic Affairs/Educational Policy Committee
 - The College Dean
 4. Authors of course proposals must meet with one of their college representatives on the GSC to review the checklist of required elements. The proposed course must then be submitted to the Director of General Studies. If a college representative has reviewed the course then it will be included on the Council's agenda.
- B. Approval: GSC Procedure for consideration of course proposal
1. The proposer will be invited to present the course proposal to the Council.
 2. If the course meets established criteria, then the Council will vote to disseminate the proposal to campus. Upon approval, the Director of General Studies disseminates the proposal for campus comments for a minimum of two weeks.
 3. The Council will vote on the proposal at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- C. The Council's decision will be forwarded to the SVCASA for final approval. Actions are recorded in the minutes and disseminated to the campus
- D. Course approvals will go into effect the following fall semester. Portal and capstone courses take effect the next available term.
- E. The GSC, when it perceives a need, may put out calls for courses in specific areas.

VI. Structural Changes

The GSC is the final recommending body prior to final approval by the SVCASA.

- A. The GSC is responsible for regular review of program structure and objectives, especially in light of assessment data, evolving admission standards, and changing educational philosophies. Recommended changes in General Studies Program Structure may be initiated by the Council or interested parties on campus.
 1. Definition of “Structure”: “Structure” includes total program required hours, program sub-divisions, and required hours assigned to and within program sub-divisions.
- B. Procedures for approving structural changes
 1. Proposals must include a detailed written description of the proposed structural change and a rationale supporting the reason for the change.
 - The proposer must submit the proposal through the appropriate Council representative(s)
 - The representative(s) will forward the proposal to the Director of General Studies who will place the proposal on the agenda of the regularly scheduled meeting.
 - Procedures for review and approval described in section V. B1 and B2 will be followed.
 2. Proposals approved by the GSC (section I. B3) must then be forwarded to the college Educational Policy/Academic Affairs committees and the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs committee for review and recommendations.
 - Recommendations from the College Educational Policy/Academic Affairs committees and the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee must be made to the GSC within 60 working days in order to be considered by the Council. Any proposal not returned by the 60 working day deadline will be considered to be an approval by that body.
 3. The GSC will review the recommendations and take them into consideration to amend, approve, or reject the proposal.

VII. Goals/Objectives Changes

- A. The General Studies Program General Objectives may be changed by the Council to reflect evolving demographic characteristics, assessment data, Academic Program Review recommendations and/or philosophical views.
 1. The Council may solicit opinions, proposals, or initiate changes in the general goals or objectives of the entire GS program or its categories.
 2. The Council will follow the procedures described in in Section B below
- B. Category/Department Objectives

Category/Department objectives may need to be revised periodically in order to reflect changes in the discipline.

 1. A department offering or proposing to offer courses in the category may elect to propose a change of the objectives.

- The proposal must be submitted in writing with the explicit change of the objectives.
 - Prior to submission to the GSC, evidence of support must be obtained from:
 - The Department Chair
 - The College Educational Policy/Academic Affairs Committee
 - The College Dean
 - All College Educational Policy/Academic Affairs committees of the other undergraduate colleges
 - The Chair of the submitting department must meet with their college representatives on the GSC.
 - The proposed objective must then be submitted to the Director of General Studies for inclusion on the Council's agenda.
2. GSC Procedure for consideration of Category/Department objective proposal
- The proposer will be invited to present the proposal for the new/revised objective to the Council.
 - If the proposal is approved, then the Council will vote to disseminate the proposal to campus. Upon approval, the Director of General Studies disseminates the proposal for campus comments for a minimum of two weeks.
 - The Council will vote on the proposal at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
 - The Council's decision will be forwarded to the SVCASA for final approval. Actions are recorded in the minutes and disseminated to the campus
3. Approved changes in Objectives a will go into effect for the next catalog year.
4. The GSC, when it perceives a need, may put out calls for objectives in specific areas.

VIII. Fundamental Changes to the GS Program

The General Studies (GS) program may need to be reviewed in response to assessment data, evolving admission standards, academic program reviews, or changing educational philosophies. Such a review may result in proposed restructuring so fundamental that it alters or replaces the stated philosophy, mission, goals, or content of the existing program. The procedures described in previous sections of this Governance Document, while adequate for revising the existing program, do not articulate a process needed for more comprehensive restructuring. The procedure described below outlines the process for enacting such changes.

- A. The GSC or another academic governing body (College or Faculty Senate) may develop a proposal for major revisions to the existing mission, philosophy, objectives, content, or required hours of the GS program. The proposal must be submitted in accordance with the governance guidelines of the respective

governing body. A proposal sponsored by the Faculty Senate or a College would be submitted to the SVCASA. The SVCASA will review the initiative and either return it to the Faculty Senate or College with suggestions for reworking, or forward it to the GSC with recommendations to review, develop, and ultimately submit for ratification and implementation.

- B. The GSC is responsible for evaluating the specific requirements of any proposed GS program. This purview includes suggesting changes to philosophical definition, structural guidelines and requirements, courses and content, pedagogical objectives, and assessment requirements. In reviewing and/or developing a proposed GS program, the GSC will seek appropriate input from across campus. The GSC may return a proposed GS program from the Faculty Senate or College that originated it with comments for review by that body. After the respective body has reconsidered the proposed GS program, it may resubmit the proposal to the SVCASA for further consideration.
- C. The GSC will vote to disseminate the proposed GS program to all faculty and to submit it to the College educational policy/academic affairs committees for review and input. The educational policy/academic affairs committees must return to the GSC any comments they wish to have considered about the proposed GS program. This response must be received one week prior to the second regularly scheduled monthly GSC meeting date after the proposal is received by the educational policy/academic affairs committees. Thus, if a proposal were received by the educational policy/academic affairs committees in January, they must submit responses by one week prior to the March meeting of the GSC.
- D. The GSC will review the recommendations of the College educational policy/academic affairs committees, make changes where deemed necessary, and vote to submit the GS program for ratification by the Colleges.
- E. The College educational policy/academic affairs committees will conduct a ratification election by their eligible faculty. Eligibility to vote is determined by the constitution of each College. An affirmative vote by 2/3rd of those who vote is required in 3 of the 4 Colleges for ratification of the GS program.
- F. Results of the vote must be received by the GSC one week prior to the second regularly scheduled monthly GSC meeting date after the proposal is received by the educational policy/academic affairs committees for purposes of conducting a ratification election. If no voting result is reported from a College within this deadline, the Director of General Studies will contact the College Educational Policy/Academic Affairs Committee Chair for the results of the vote. If a College or Colleges vote not to ratify the proposed GS program, the College(s) should return to the GSC the election results with any comments from College faculty indicating what concerns led to non-ratification. The GSC will review the comments and make changes if deemed appropriate and may resubmit the proposal to each of the four undergraduate colleges for another ratification election.
- G. The GSC will submit the proposed GS program, the GSC's recommendations, and the voting results from each College to the SVCASA. The SVCASA will make the final decision.

IX. College GS Requirements

- A. Colleges may specify courses that their majors must take within the GS program. Portals and Capstone courses may not be listed as required or elective courses for any program (major, minor, etc.)
 - B. Colleges are encouraged to accommodate those students who change majors
 - C. GS Requirements must appear in the catalog
- X. Recognition
- A. The GSC will develop standards and procedures for recognition of outstanding General Studies faculty.