



M E M O R A N D U M

Date: October 31, 2008

To: Troy Berry, Academic Advising Programs
Bill Loker, Undergraduate Education, Co-chair
Margaret Owens, College of Natural Sciences
Chela Mendoza Patterson, Educational Opportunity Program
Shekhar Misra, Finance and Marketing
Robert Tinkler, History, GEAC
Sara Trechter, English, Co-chair
Lori Beth Way, Political Science, EPPC
Charles Zartman, Professional Studies in Education

From: Sandra M. Flake, Provost 

Subject: General Education Design Team

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the General Education Design Team. I appreciate the important service you will be providing to Academic Affairs and CSU, Chico as we revisit the General Education program with the goal of recommending ways we can improve student learning of the essential knowledge, skills and attributes for an educated participant in civic and intellectual life in the 21st century.

Background

Last year, in discussing a charge to the General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC) with Chris Fosen, the chair, and Bill Loker, Dean of Undergraduate Education, I asked that the committee bring me up to date on our assessment of General Education by reviewing the course reviews and assessments of the program or components over the past several years. I was interested in the results of those reviews, i.e., what we had learned about the program, as well as the actions or changes that had been made or that the committee recommended be made. I was interested as well in their recommendations for the future of General Education at CSU, Chico. Over the course of my first several months on campus, I also had several conversations about General Education, some initiated by faculty and administrators, and some initiated by me as I was learning about our academic programs. And, during the year, the California State University System conducted a review of General Education which resulted in a new Executive Order.

In spring, GEAC provided its report ([GEAC Report](#)), which included a recommendation for review and revision of the program. In summer, the Chancellor's office issued a new Executive Order regarding General Education, [EO 1033](#), in response to the recommendations of the Chancellor's General Education Advisory Committee, which included essential student learning

outcomes from the Liberal Education and America's Promise ([LEAP](#)) Campaign. In addition, last year we completed the Academic Plan for CSU, Chico, a plan that focuses our attention on five major goals. General Education can be a significant component in our ability to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves over the next five years. Finally, the CSU will be participating in an AAC&U LEAP States Initiative, "Give Students a Compass: College Learning, General Education and Student Success." The time is right for reconsideration of our General Education program.

Charge

The Design Team is charged to engage in a deep, deliberative examination of the current General Education program and the policies that guide it, and through consultation revise General Education to improve student learning of the essential knowledge, skills and attributes for an educated participant in civic and intellectual life in the 21st century.

Our goals for a 21st General Education program must be clear, and the program we offer our students must have the following attributes:

- **Compatible** -- with State and CSU system-level mandates regarding GE.
- **"Portable"** -- students who transfer in or out are not penalized.
- **Assessable** -- essential learning outcomes are articulated and capable of being observed or measured.
- **Affordable** -- given the current and projected budget environment of our campus.
- **Coherent** -- an integral and integrated contribution to a student's academic experience at CSU, Chico.

In that context, the design team needs to base its recommendations on consideration of our current program, the recommendations from GEAC, and the requirements of [EO-1033](#). During this year, GEAC will be continuing its review of the current program, and results will be shared with the Design Team. The review they are completing will include an outside consultant to visit the campus, ideally, early in spring semester, and the Design Team will have opportunities to meet with the consultant as well.

Process

1. Review the [GEAC Report](#), *GEAC "Meta-Analysis" of Assessment Reports and Faculty Perceptions* and related assessment information ([Writing, Oral Communications and Quantitative Reasoning across GE](#), [Critical Thinking across GE](#)) to identify strengths and weaknesses of the current program.
2. Review all relevant documents associated with General Education (Title 5, [EO-1033](#), [EM 99-05](#), [AA-MOU on Administration of GE](#)).
3. Review recent thinking on General Education nationally, e.g AAC&U [LEAP](#) report, [UC](#) report on General Education, [Harvard](#) revision of General Education and others.
4. Review General Education programs at other CSUs, and elsewhere that may provide models for revisions on our campus.
5. Consult openly with stakeholders (faculty, students, Provost, Deans, staff, alumni), soliciting input, ideas and proposals for a revised General Education program.
6. Based on consultation and deliberation, forward one or more plans for General Education reform to the campus community for approval through the formal curriculum revision process (EPPC, Senate).

I would like to receive the design team draft report and recommendations by mid-March, so that it can be considered by the Planning and Budget Committee and Council of Chairs and Program Directors before the end of the academic year.

Timeline

November, 2008	Design Team convened
November, 2008-April, 2009	Design Team deliberations, campus wide consultation, on-going communication with faculty staff, students, administration
December 21, 2008	Initial Progress Report to Provost
January-February, 2009	Consultation with outside Consultant
March 13, 2009	Design Team Report due to Provost
March 23, 2009	DRAFT Report to Campus Community Design Team Report distributed with review opportunities as follows: College, Unit, Department Governance Academic Affairs Forums (open to entire university community) Council of Academic Deans Council of Chairs
May 8, 2009	Design Team Report Submitted to Provost and Senate for review and action through the normal curriculum process

I would anticipate that the recommendations in the report would be acted on in early fall 2009, ideally no later than early October, so that, if necessary, an Implementation Committee could be charged and complete its work during 2009-2010.

Thank you again for being willing to serve on this important Design Team. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

cc: Kathy Kaiser, Chair, Academic Senate
Chris Fosen, Chair, GEAC
Council of Academic Deans
Council of Chairs
Drew Calandrella, Vice President, Student Affairs
Paul J. Zingg, President