

December 5, 2003

Reginald L. Pittman, Chair, UGE Council
Gerald R. Reeck, Chair, Inter-College Coordination Panel
Campus

Dear Sirs:

As you know, several difficulties that have plagued the UGE processes are increasingly troublesome. In mid-October of 2003, Provost Coffman and Faculty Senate President Zabel charged the UGE Procedures Committee to propose immediate, workable solutions to identified problems. Most members of the committee serve or have served on the UGE Council or ICCP: Jim Goddard, Kevin Donnelly, Rich Gallagher, Lynn Ewanow, Bronwyn Fees, Betsy Cauble, Marlon Johnston, Ike Ehie, Jan Wissman, and David Stewart. Nancy Kiefer, Open Option Advisor, was also a member. Vicki Clegg, UGE Provost Designate, served as staff.

The UGE Procedures Committee met several times beginning in October of 2003. It was not our charge to replace UGE at this juncture but to recommend whatever possible to make UGE processes more efficient and effective. We discussed many items at length. The discussion resulted in several items that are possible revisions to improve the current UGE processes.

The UGE Procedures Committee was asked to forward our recommendations to the UGE Council and ICCP, who will be responsible for making final determinations about which recommendations to forward to Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate.

The attached lists of items are the result of many varied viewpoints and are generally agreed upon as the items that can assist in improving the current system. Note that items A through F are action suggestions for the UGE Council and/or ICCP to undertake that would ease the process. Items One (1) through three (3) are suggestions that the Provost's Office or Administration could pursue to enhance and improve the UGE process.

Please review these items for possible actions by your Committee or Panel. If you have any questions, the UGE Procedures Committee could be available to meet with you. Thank you for your consideration of these items.

Respectfully,
James F. Goddard
Chair, UGE Procedures Committee

enclosures

cc: Provost James R. Coffman
Robert H. Zabel, President, Faculty Senate
Patricia E. Ackerman, Chair, Academic Affairs Committee

Recommendations to UGE Council and ICCP

- A. Continue the practice of allowing the College Deans to grant exceptions for graduating seniors who, for valid extenuating circumstances, have not been able to meet their program's UGE requirements and whose graduation would be delayed by at least one semester if exceptions were not granted.

ACTION: This would require an approval policy statement from the Provost and approval of ICCP.

- B. Simplify the submission/approval process through the revision of the UGE course proposal template to reduce the volume of required material, which is sometimes duplicative. Suggestions would be to require item 6 (the course syllabus, course outline and other supporting material) as the primary submittal, which should contain items 1, 3, 4, 5, & 7 on the template. Item 2 (the three major criteria for UGE courses) would be the second area. The responsible personnel for the course could be listed as the department head (see item number E on this list).

ACTION: Since this is entirely a UGE Council function, the Council could consider these revisions as possibilities to reduce the effort required by the proposing faculty, department head, or department faculty as a whole.

- C. For existing catalog approved courses, simplify the time line for approval of UGE courses by allowing courses to be sent directly to the UGE Council, after approval of the department in which the course is taught, for review of UGE approved course status rather than having to send them through the individual college course and curriculum committees or the college faculty first. This would shorten the time period required for the approval process.

ACTION: Approval by UGE Council, ICCP, Academic Affairs Committee, and Faculty Senate.

- D. Broaden the selection process for possible UGE courses by allowing faculty, departments, or administration to nominate or suggest courses for UGE course approval that logically fit the criteria for UGE courses.

ACTION: This requires a modification of UGE Council policies. ICCP would be responsible to follow-up suggested (nominated) courses to highly encourage the responsible department to propose the course(s) for the approval process. This process may also be aided by revision of the UGE Council procedures to shorten the methods for approval (see C above).

- E. Ask department heads to confirm in writing each semester or each year that the department's courses approved for UGE credit are continuing to be taught in the same manner as the UGE criteria regardless of who is currently teaching them.

ACTION: A letter from the provost (and perhaps the appropriate deans) to the department heads would be required indicating those responsibilities of the department heads. The UGE Council and ICCP would be responsible to follow-up each semester or each year. A report format similar to that used for the five (5) year UGE course reviews could be used possibly replacing the need for the five (5) year form.

- F. Allow possible modifications of the UGE College Program Requirements to allow other options as UGE equivalents. One suggestion was to look at the requirements for capstone courses and writing across the curriculum. *A possible revision might be the following:*

Allow the inclusion of one (1) upper-division course specifically designed for majors as long as the course meets specific criteria such as:

A. The three (3) UGE benchmarks:

1. An active learning environment,
2. Experiential context for the matter to be studied, and
3. The opportunity for students to seek connections across knowledge, **AND**

B. Significant advanced writing experiences, assuring that students get adequate feedback not only on content, but also on expression, and are given opportunities for revision and further feedback.

ACTION: Approval by the UGE Council and Academic Affairs.

Additional recommended actions by the Provost's Office or University Administration as appropriate.

1. To improve record keeping for UGE actions, provide a Graduate Assistant to maintain the data. In addition, a faculty member could be appointed to facilitate the UGE process as a part of their appointment. This would improve the institutional memory for all UGE processes and records. Also, faculty could use this person to assist in the preparation of UGE course proposals. At this time, the KSU Undergraduate Honor System has a part-time director and a full-time associate director. Since the UGE program that affects every student's graduation requirements is extremely important, this appointment would be a great benefit.

ACTION: The Provost's Office should provide positions to maintain the UGE process in a more efficient manner. Continuity of a standardized procedure would be assured.

2. Resources could be provided to support all faculty teaching UGE courses. Since all students are required to complete the UGE program, faculty endure increased

enrollments in their UGE courses and more grading/organization responsibilities. These faculty do not enjoy additional benefits with these increased loads. Given the responsibilities placed on the offering department to provide instructors for the UGE courses, additional support could be given in the form of Graduate Assistants or part-time instructors to either teach some sections or to assist with grading.

ACTION: The Provost's Office should study this impact upon faculty. Many courses have not been proposed for UGE approval because faculty see approval as a sign that their course enrollments will increase significantly. Offering some support to those faculty would encourage the approval of more courses as UGE courses.

3. There have been major problems with course teaching methodologies when UGE courses are taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). They have not been trained or provided workshop opportunities to understand teaching methodologies appropriate for "active learning" methods, for application of "experiential context," or for "fostering connections across disciplines." While this has been discussed for a couple of years, it is necessary for action.

ACTION: The Provost's Office should initiate new policies for all GTAs. Preferably, all GTAs should be required to have participated in multiple teaching methodology workshops prior to being assigned to teach courses. The workshops would provide the necessary training for these new teachers thus improving course presentation and satisfying UGE requirements for those courses that have UGE approval. It would also serve to improve the quality of the courses taught by GTAs that are **not** UGE approved. While we know it may not be practical, it is preferable that GTAs not be allowed to teach during their first semester on campus to allow for attending these workshops prior to teaching courses.