

**2008-09 ACADEMIC SENATE REVIEW OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION:  
*FOUNDATIONS of SOCIETY AND CULTURE***

**Internal Reviewer:**

Joseph H. Manson, Undergraduate Council, Department of Anthropology,  
Review Team Chair

**External Reviewer:**

Michael S. Schudson, Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego

**Date of Site Visit:** April 15, 2009

**Date of Report:** June 5, 2009

**Approved by the Undergraduate Council:                      June 5, 2009**

**Appendix I:**                      Site Visit Schedule

**Appendix II:**                      External Reviewer Report

**Appendix III:**                      Self-Review Report

*(The self-review was previously distributed. If you need a hard copy, please contact the Academic Senate Office at extension 62959.)*

**Academic Program Review**  
General Education: Foundations of Society and Culture  
April 15, 2009

**Introduction**

Following the recommendations of the 1997 UCLA faculty-student report on the General Education curriculum and the initiatives of Dean/Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Judith L. Smith and the Undergraduate Council, the General Education Governance Committee was instituted in 1998-99 to oversee the creation of campus-wide General Education (GE) curricula and course lists in three foundational areas: Arts and Humanities, Society and Culture, and Scientific Inquiry. The foundation framework and common course list were adopted by the College in 2002 and the professional schools with undergraduate programs in 2004 and 2005. As of Fall 2006, all incoming UCLA freshmen satisfy their GE requirements by taking a requisite number of courses across three foundation areas of knowledge. With the institution of this common GE curriculum, all courses carrying GE credit, old and new, have been reviewed by the GE Governance Committee, its ad hoc workgroups, and the Undergraduate Council according to the criteria set forth in the mission statements and course guidelines developed by UCLA faculty for the different foundation areas. The Scientific Inquiry foundational area was reviewed in 2006-2007. The Society and Culture (hereafter, S&C) foundational area review was scheduled for 2008-2009, with the site visit occurring on April 15, 2009. The review committee was charged with several tasks. We sought to determine whether the S&C curriculum is being delivered in accordance with the goals formulated in its mission statement (see below). Furthermore, we explored whether the S&C-GE-fulfilling status of courses was adequately known to course instructors and whether it was sufficiently considered when courses acquired new instructors and new syllabi. We also considered two somewhat controversial issues: (1) whether T.A.-led discussion sections should continue to be mandatory for S&C-GE courses and (2) whether the S&C-GE requirement should be expanded to include a "Diversity Requirement."

The review team consisted of one internal reviewer (Joseph Manson, Anthropology, Undergraduate Council) and one external reviewer (Michael S. Schudson, Communication, University of California, San Diego). Meetings were held in A-244 Murphy Hall; because of the multiple divisional and departmental housing of the S&C foundation, no walk-through visits were scheduled. During the site visit the review team met with Dean/Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Judith Smith and Robert Gurval, Chair of the GE Governance Committee; the Chair (Muriel McClendon), Ad Hoc Committee of the S&C Foundation Area; the Deans of the Social Sciences and Humanities Divisions (Reynaldo Macías and Timothy Stowell); faculty and graduate students who have taught S&C courses; and Jeremiah Garcia, the Academic Affairs Commissioner of the Undergraduate Students Association Council. Based on our reading of the S&C Ad Hoc Review Committee Self-Report and our discussions during the site visit, both Review Team members agree that the S&C-GE curriculum is fulfilling its mission admirably. We concur in general with the relatively minor recommendations for improvement made by the S&C Ad Hoc Review Committee, as discussed below.

## **Mission and Implementation of the Society and Culture Foundation Curriculum**

The mission statement for the S&C curriculum defines its aims as “to introduce students to the ways in which humans organize, structure, rationalize and govern their diverse societies and cultures over time. These courses focus on a particular historical question, societal problem, or topic of political and economic concern in an effort to demonstrate to students how issues are objectified for study, how data is collected and analyzed and how new understandings of social phenomena are achieved and evaluated.”

Each S&C course is classified as belonging to one or both of two subfields, Social Analysis and Historical Analysis. Students in most of UCLA’s units are required to take one course from each subfield plus one course from either subfield. Students in the Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science need take only two S&C courses, one from each subfield.

UCLA freshmen are able to fulfill approximately one or more of their S&C-GE requirement by taking one of 13 three-quarter cluster sequences, which integrate perspectives on a single broadly conceived topic from multiple disciplinary perspectives (two additional cluster sequences include no S&C courses). Thus, these sequences (1) are designed specifically as sets of GE courses (they do not fulfill the requirements of any major); (2) powerfully embody the ideals of general education at all stages from preliminary planning to implementation; and (3) recruit faculty who are particularly dedicated to delivering general education. We heard enthusiastic and near-unanimous praise for the pedagogical and intellectual benefits of the Freshman Cluster Program. Besides being very well-liked by students, the clusters provide graduate T.A.s with specialized pedagogical training and experience, including training in writing instruction, and they benefit participating faculty by requiring them to work closely with scholars outside their field. The cluster sequences also bring faculty from the professional schools (e.g. the Medicine and Public Health) into undergraduate teaching, an encouraging development that should be expanded. Prof. Schudson states that the Cluster Program “pushes faculty out beyond their comfort zones, forces a level of genuine interdisciplinary work, presses faculty as well as students to consider questions anew and not to stick to departmental and disciplinary presuppositions” (Schudson: 1). Only two criticisms of the Cluster Program were raised. One graduate T.A. told us that in the cluster in which he taught, the second quarter became unfocused and left the students confused. It is to be expected that the development of these courses, with multiple instructors from different disciplines, will sometimes be a bit bumpy, particularly the first time they are taught. A department chair complained that because the Cluster Program has been decreasing its level of compensation to departments for releasing their faculty to teach in the cluster, departments are now in effect subsidizing the Cluster Program. However, the Cluster Program provides employment to many graduate students from the same departments that furnish the faculty instructors.

To fulfill the S&C requirement, traditional (i.e. non-cluster) courses must be approved by the GE Governance Committee’s Foundations of Society and Culture Workgroup. As an application for approval, course instructors must submit a standardized course information sheet that describes concisely how the course fulfills the S&C mission statement and how it adheres to the more general GE principles of General Knowledge, Integrative Learning, Ethical Implications, etc., and a sample syllabus. Most applications are approved. When they are rejected, this is for sound

intellectual reasons, e.g. because a course places artistic productions in their historical context yet does not expose students to genuine historical analysis. The S&C Workgroup provides feedback to instructors whose course applications have been rejected, and negotiates with them over modifications that may make the course acceptable as S&C-GE. “One has a high degree of confidence, in the end, that the courses in fact serve the educational goals of general education” (Schudson: 1).

The S&C Ad Hoc Review Committee Self-Report provides a wealth of detail about the course titles, formats, sizes and instructor statuses (ladder faculty or non-ladder) of the 134 courses currently acceptable as S&C-GE. Most are in Social Science departments (including 37 in History) while all but a few of the remainder are in Humanities Departments. The courses are almost all lower division, and are either large lecture courses with T.A.-led discussion sections, or smaller lecture or seminar courses. Presently, large lecture courses (i.e., those that exceed 100 students) are not eligible for GE credit without the addition of formal discussion sections.

The Department of Political Science has requested that an exemption be granted from this policy of requiring discussion sections for two of their large lower-division GE courses (Political Science 20 and 50). A faculty member of this department argued on behalf of his own course (Political Science 20) on the grounds that (1) demand for the course is very high, as it serves as both preparation for the major and an S&C-GE and (2) it would create more overall utility to provide a lower-quality course to a larger number of students than a higher-quality course to a smaller number of students. However, when we asked why Political Science limits its discussion section sizes to 12, we did not receive a cogent answer. Furthermore, we were more impressed by the arguments for maintaining the mandatory discussion section policy without exception. A major part of the GE reform of 2002 was to ensure that students be introduced to “ways of knowing,” meaning the close reading of primary texts, which can only be carried out in discussion sections or small lecture courses. As one faculty member put it, “If it hasn’t come from a student’s mouth or pen, they don’t know it yet.” One recommendation of the Boyer Report (*Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*) is that large research universities provide small-scale learning environments. Prof. Schudson states that GE courses should deliver “not only course content but the opportunity for lively discussion of that content in small sections where the undergraduates would feel safe and secure to speak and where they could feel known and recognized by a graduate teaching assistant” (Schudson: 2).

The S&C Self-Report notes that approximately two-thirds of S&C-GE courses have been taught by ladder faculty during the past four years, and recommends that all S&C-GE courses be taught or supervised by ladder faculty, as stipulated by the Undergraduate Council during the 2002 GE reform. We concur, and we note that in the current financial climate, during which non-ladder faculty positions will probably be severely cut, it is crucial that departments not sacrifice their S&C-GE offerings in the interest of preserving their teaching capacity for courses intended for their majors (only 36/134 S&C courses are listed as preparation for a social science or humanities major). Departments should realize that S&C-GE courses, in addition to being a public good, could recruit students to their majors. Yet, as Dean Macías acknowledged during his meeting with the committee, no concrete incentives can be offered to departments for offering GE courses.

The S&C Self-Report raises the possibility that institutional amnesia may have eroded “GE-awareness” in some of the courses certified as S&C-GE at the time of the 2002 GE reform. The instructors of two of the three courses selected for detailed review (*Latin American Social History* and *Introduction to Sociology*) did not know that their courses carried GE credit, while the instructor of the third, *Modern Art*, knew that the course carried GE credit but did not know in what area(s), or how this should affect the teaching of the class. It should be noted that all three courses were judged to be fulfilling their S&C-GE mission.

The committee heard various suggestions regarding how to deal with the possibility that some S&C courses will “drift” from their S&C-GE-compliant syllabi to the point that they no longer fulfill the goals formulated in the S&C curriculum mission statement. These included: (1) requiring department chairs to meet with new instructors of S&C courses and inform them of the requirements formulated in the S&C mission statement; and (2) standardization of course syllabi to “clearly demonstrate the way that a course carrying S&C GE credit fulfills the aims of this foundation area” (the Self-Review’s recommendation). We favor, as a less onerous yet hopefully equally effective alternative to any of these, “draft[ing] a paragraph adaptable by individual faculty members for this purpose that defines GE program objectives” (Schudson: 2) that could be inserted into course syllabi. This paragraph could be sent, along with an emailed form letter, to all instructors of S&C GE courses before the beginning of each quarter.

In 2003-2004, a proposal to institute a one-course “Diversity Requirement” was rejected by a vote of the College of Letters & Science faculty. The Schools of Nursing and Arts & Architecture have adopted a “Diversity Requirement” in their schools’ Academic Senate regulations. As part of the current review, the committee was asked to consider whether to recommend that a “Diversity Requirement” be incorporated within the S&C GE requirement – i.e. that all S&C GE courses be evaluated with regard to whether they meet a set of diversity criteria, and that all undergraduates be required to take one course from among the courses thus certified. Dean Macías and the Undergraduate Students Association Council representative both urged such a recommendation. Several arguments were advanced in support of a “Diversity Requirement,” including (1) UCLA is the only UC campus not to have a “Diversity Requirement”; (2) familiarity with diversity issues is important for success in today’s world and (3) the requirement would not impose an additional burden on students or faculty, because it would be fulfilled with a course that would also count toward the existing S&C GE requirement, and would not require the development of any new courses.

Prof. Schudson states that he “[does] not see any harm in requiring students to fulfill a “Diversity Requirement” with one of their three ‘Society and Culture’ courses – if diversity is appropriately defined.” (Schudson: 4). I too am somewhat perplexed by definitional problems surrounding “diversity.” The 2003 Letters & Science “Diversity Requirement” proposal (which was appended to the letter addressed to the GE Governance Committee from the USAC) would restrict diversity credit to courses that “focus...in a central and substantial way on issues, theories, and methods relevant to analyzing and understanding inter-group dynamics and diversity in its broadest sense” and the proposal comments further on these criteria:

In formulating this proposal, we have defined diversity carefully but broadly, and deliberately left the extent of each course's engagement with issues and perspectives of diversity somewhat vague ("focuses in a central and substantial way"). We believe that this language empowers a committee grounded within each Foundation Area to develop more specific guidelines as necessary, so as to evaluate individual courses and to work with departments who wish to attain diversity standing for particular courses.

These criteria are, indeed, vague. According to the 2003 proposal, 10 S&C GE courses would probably not qualify for diversity credit. Reading the syllabi of some of the six excluded History courses, for example, left me mystified as to why they were judged to have failed to meet the standard quoted above. During the site visit, I asked Dean Macías which S&C GE courses he would propose to exclude from the list of diversity courses. He answered that he was unprepared to do so.

As Prof. Schudson notes, the undergraduate representative who met with us seemed to believe that diversity credit should be restricted to courses dealing with contemporary inter-group relations. I concur with Prof. Schudson's argument against using this standard. The undergraduate representative suggested that "critical thinking" be a required component of diversity courses, but he was unable to define this term.

Prof. Schudson concludes that "more research is needed" before deciding whether to institute a "Diversity Requirement" at UCLA. I would add that the central goal of this research should be to produce a clear, explicit statement of the standards that would be used to admit a course to the list of diversity courses. Such a statement is necessary to (1) permit an informed judgment regarding the pedagogical value of a proposed "Diversity Requirement" and (2) produce (in the event that a "Diversity Requirement" is enacted) the transparency that UCLA faculty have a right to expect from all aspects of university governance. I believe a strong argument can be made that *all* currently approved S&C GE courses "focus...in a central and substantial way on issues, theories, and methods relevant to analyzing and understanding inter-group dynamics and diversity in its broadest sense," making a specific "Diversity Requirement" redundant.

### **Recommendations**

The Society and Culture Foundation is "well and seriously administered" and the Cluster Program in particular is the "jewel in the crown" of UCLA General Education (Schudson: 1). The following recommendations are intended to maintain and enhance this already high level of quality.

#### **To the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and the General Education Governance Committee (GEGC):**

1. [*essential*] Ensuring That Course Content Remains Consistent with the S&C Mission Statement.

- A. Archive course syllabi. If a course syllabus has changed substantially from the previous occasion when the course was taught, it should be reviewed by the appropriate GE Governance Committee's Foundation Area Workgroup(s).
  - B. The "boilerplate paragraph," outlining S&C GE course objectives, should be written and automatically distributed to instructors of S&C GE courses. Possibly two such paragraphs should be prepared, one for Social Analysis and one for Historical Analysis courses.
  - C. The GE Governance Committee should develop and distribute the proposed "Guidelines on Course Submissions for GE Credit in Foundations of Society and Culture."
  - D. As recommended in the Self-Report, "all large lecture courses carrying S&C GE credit should have discussion sections that meet for at least 50 minutes each week and enroll no more than 25 students."
2. [*essential*] Examine the distribution of resources for teaching in the Cluster Program. This issue needs more attention, though it is not clear what solutions will emerge.

**To GEGC and to Departments Offering GE Courses:**

3. Faculty Involvement and Commitment to General Education:
  - A. All courses carrying S&C GE credit should be taught and/or supervised by ladder faculty.
  - B. Faculty from outside the College (e.g. Law, Public Policy) should be encouraged to teach or co-teach S&C GE courses.
4. Before considering whether a "Diversity Requirement" should be incorporated into the College of Letters & Science S&C GE requirement, the faculty should engage broadly in the discussion to define diversity in the context of GE.

**Final Recommendation:**

Pending a satisfactory progress review, the Undergraduate Council recommends that the General Education: Foundations of Society and Culture be reviewed on a regular eight-year schedule in Academic Year 2016-17.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph H. Manson, Undergraduate Council, Review Team Chair, Anthropology

Date submitted: June 5, 2009

**APPENDIX I**

**GENERAL EDUCATION: *FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY & CULTURE***

**SITE VISIT SCHEDULE**

**UCLA Academic Senate Program Review  
General Education Curriculum  
*Foundations of Society and Culture*  
Wednesday, April 15, 2009**

Schedule

**TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2009**

**7:00 p.m.**     **Dinner meeting:** Initial organizational session for review team members only.  
*Professor Joseph Manson, Review Team Chair, will meet the External Reviewer, Professor Michael Schudson in the hotel lobby at approximately 6:50 PM.*

Luxe Hotel\*, On Sunset Restaurant, 11461 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049, 310.476.6571.  
(Dinner Reservation: UCLA: GE Society & Culture, 2 people.)

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009**

8:00 – 8:30 am                             Initial organizational session for Review Team  
*A-244 Murphy Hall*

8:30 – 9:20 am                             Breakfast with Judith Smith, Dean/Vice Provost for  
*A-244 Murphy Hall*                         Undergraduate Education and Robert Gurval, Chair of the General  
Education (GE) Governance Committee (Classics)

9:30 – 10:20 am                            Meeting with the Foundations of Society and Culture Ad Hoc  
*A-244 Murphy Hall*                        Committee  
*Confirmed attendees:* M. Gregory Kendrick (History/Director of  
Freshman Cluster Program); Scott Bartchy (History/Study of  
Religion); Robert Gurval (Classics); Muriel McClendon, Ad Hoc  
Committee Chair (History)  
*The following committee members are tentative or unconfirmed:*  
Jeff Brantingham (Anthropology); Stanley Trimble (Geography);  
Blaire Van Valkenburgh (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology).  
Steven Nelson (Art History) and Abel Valenzuela Jr. (Chicana/o  
Studies) are unable to attend.

10:30 – 11:20 am                            Meeting with Department Chairs & faculty who regularly teach  
*A-244 Murphy Hall*                         courses in the Foundations of Society and Culture (Freshman  
Cluster Program and traditional quarter-long courses)  
*Confirmed attendees:* Richard Anderson (Political Science);  
JoAnn Damron-Rodriguez (Aging Cluster); Robert Frank  
(History); Toby Higbie (Work, Labor, and Social Justice Cluster);

	William Roy (Sociology); Olga Yokoyama (Applied Linguistics & TESL)
11:45 am – 12:45 pm <i>Faculty Center</i>	Lunch with the GE Governance Committee's Foundations of Society and Culture Workgroup M. Gregory Kendrick, Foundation Area Resource (History/Freshman Cluster Program); Scott Bartchy (History/Study of Religion); and David Rigby (Geography)
1:00 – 1:50 pm <i>A-244 Murphy Hall</i>	Meeting with the Deans of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Timothy Stowell (Humanities) Acting Dean Reynaldo Macias (Social Sciences)
2:00 – 2:40 pm <i>A-244 Murphy Hall</i>	Meeting with graduate students who have taught courses in the Foundations of Society and Culture (clusters and traditional quarter-long courses) <i>Confirmed attendees:</i> Zevi Gutfreund and Karen Muldoon-Hules
2:40 – 3:00 pm <i>A-244 Murphy Hall</i>	Meeting with Homaira Hosseini, USAC President Jeremiah Garcia, USAC Academic Affairs Commissioner is unconfirmed.
3:00 – 3:50 pm <i>A-244 Murphy Hall</i>	Closed Session (Review Team)
4:00 – 4:50 pm <i>2121 Murphy Hall</i>	<b>Exit Meeting</b> Review Team; Judith Smith, Dean/Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education; Robert Gurval, Chair of the GE Governance Committee; Muriel McClendon, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee; Dorothy Wiley, Undergraduate Council Chair; Mark Hansen, College FEC representative; Scott Waugh, Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost; and M. Gregory Kendrick, Director of the Freshman Cluster Program

*\*The Luxe offers a shuttle to campus that operates from 7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. Reservations may be made through the Luxe Hotel (\$5.00 fee per trip/person), or there is no cost on a first come-first-serve basis. However, a seat is not guaranteed without making a reservation in advance. Transportation from UCLA back to the Luxe may also be arranged.*

**APPENDIX II**

**GENERAL EDUCATION: *FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY & CULTURE***

**EXTERNAL REVIEWER'S REPORT**

Michael S. Schudson, Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego

## UCLA General Education Review

Report from External Reviewer Michael Schudson

April 26, 2009

In most American colleges and universities, academic departments are the units that control the undergraduate curriculum. Their focus is on establishing and maintaining intellectual quality in courses and intellectual coherence across courses in a major. General education requirements are normally a set of “distribution requirements” that demand of students that they take a minimum array of courses in departments and divisions outside their major.

The UCLA general education program is distinguished from this standard practice in two vital respects. The “jewel in the crown” is certainly the cluster program. This program, now a decade old, brings faculty from different departments, divisions, and schools together to co-plan and co-teach courses that intentionally cut across conventional disciplinary boundaries. Although planning these courses is a very demanding task (the planning process normally takes two years), the cluster program has impressive ladder faculty participation. It has enthusiasm from students, faculty and graduate TAs alike. It serves about 40 percent of the freshman class. And it does what the vast majority of general education programs across the country fail to do – pushes faculty out beyond their comfort zones, forces a level of genuine interdisciplinary work, presses faculty as well as students to consider questions anew and not to stick to departmental and disciplinary presuppositions. We heard that cluster teaching assistants learn a great deal by the obligation to talk across disciplines and that teaching in the cluster courses enhances TA commitment to teaching as a key element in their professional identity.

The UCLA program is distinguished in a second dimension: that it is well and seriously administered. Courses that are accepted as fulfilling GE requirements are vetted by a committee willing to make tough decisions about what courses to accept and what courses not to accept. In practice, very few courses that departments propose as fulfilling GE requirements are turned down – but many more are returned for modification or become part of a discussion and negotiation between the GE Governance Committee and the faculty member proposing the course, all to the end of revising the course in ways that bring it closer to fulfilling GE goals. One has a high degree of confidence, in the end, that the courses in fact serve the educational goals of general education. The authority of the GE Governance Committee has emerged out of the GE reforms launched in the mid-1990s with the 1997 “General Education at UCLA: A Proposal for Change” report, the development of the office of Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education with authority over general education, and the creation of the GE Governance Committee by Vice Provost Judith Smith and the Undergraduate Council.

The internal review did turn up a distressing finding – reinforced by our examination of syllabi for the GE courses – that the “GE-ness” of the courses in many cases has faded into near or total invisibility. Two faculty members in the small sample of courses the

internal review examined in depth did not even know that their courses fulfilled GE requirements. Few of the course syllabi mention to students that the course fulfills GE requirements and still fewer detail for students what the goals of general education are. It seems to me that this is a minimum requirement – that faculty who teach GE courses should say in their syllabi and repeat in their opening presentation to students that the course they teach fulfills GE requirements and that it does so because it is (at least partially) dedicated to the goals inscribed in the general education requirement.

The internal review is serious and thorough. I am happy to endorse all four of its recommendations. Let me just make a few remarks about this:

1. The idea of archiving GE course syllabi is obvious but excellent. So is the suggestion that course syllabi carrying GE credit should say so and should say what this means in terms of the course content and course objectives. I think it would be advisable for the GE Governance Committee to draft a paragraph adaptable by individual faculty members for this purpose that defines GE program objectives. I do not think that there need be efforts to “standardize” course syllabi beyond this – the term “standardize” in the internal review committee’s recommendation is a more rigid term than I would like to see. Most of the course syllabi I read were thoughtful and thorough; some were remarkably complete. A few were too sketchy, to my taste, but I don’t think the GE Governance Committee need spend its time arriving at an overall template for course syllabi. Faculty will simply vary on this and I see no harm in that. On the other hand, the “Proposed Guidelines on Course Submissions for GE Credit in Foundations of Society and Culture” that is under consideration now by the GE Governance Committee seems genuinely helpful and, once the Governance Committee has completed these guidelines, should be distributed to all faculty and departments offering GE courses or intending to do so.
2. The second recommendation of the internal review committee -- that the GE Governance Committee outline its expectations for courses carrying GE credit -- can be expeditiously handled by drafting the boilerplate paragraph I suggest above. It may be that there should be two such paragraphs, one for “historical analysis” and one for “social analysis.” At any rate, the “Proposed Guidelines...” essentially will serve this role – so long as the Committee communicates to instructors the expectation that a paragraph about GE course objectives belongs in the introduction to every GE course syllabus.
3. I endorse the recommendation that all Society and Culture GE courses have discussion sections. We heard a conscientious counter-argument about this from political science. We recognized that there are some complicated issues and choices to make in enrollment-impacted departments about the distribution of TA resources, but I do not think that on this point it is appropriate to make exceptions to what seems crucial for general education – not only course content but the opportunity for lively discussion of that content in small sections where the undergraduates would feel safe and secure to speak and where they could feel known and recognized by a graduate teaching assistant.

4. Finally, I agree that whenever possible GE courses should be taught by ladder faculty. Here, of course, one recognizes that by necessity there will be exceptions – one should not deny for a moment that sometimes temporary faculty and part-time lecturers have performed brilliantly in the classroom. Still, as a general rule, it is good policy for undergraduates and for the ladder faculty to be educated by each other.

I want to add several additional comments and recommendations that for convenience I will continue to number:

5. This is very likely pie-in-the-sky but at a moment of grave national (and global) economic crisis is hard to ignore: is it not a problem – and a symptom -- that not a single member of the Department of Economics participates in the GE program? I do not think that this is peculiar to UCLA. Economics departments are often besieged by large numbers of students. The teaching of economics typically becomes very technical even in introductory courses, more so than in most other social sciences. Economics faculty do not have much time to extend themselves into general education nor do they want to recruit additional majors through GE courses. I do not know how economics might be integrated into general education, but to the extent that general education is related to helping make college graduates better citizens, knowing something about how economists think and how they define economic problems is surely of considerable importance. I suggest that discussion at least be opened, under the auspices of the Vice Provost, with a set of faculty in economics about creating an “economics for non-majors” course or about participating in a cluster course.

6. Another topic that seems appropriate for preliminary discussions concerns what role, if any, the graduate professional schools should play in undergraduate education. Through the cluster courses, faculty members at several of the professional schools already take part in teaching undergraduates in general education. This is a boon to students who get acquainted with people practiced in approaching intellectual problems in the context of practical professional service. It is a boon to the faculty who are obliged to put their learning in a broader context and who have the pleasure of collegiality across disciplinary borders with faculty from Arts & Letters and other divisions of the university. The professional school faculty involved can then become ambassadors of information between the professional schools and the arts and sciences departments. Research universities over time have absorbed many professional schools – but by accretion rather than by integration. General education is an opportunity to keep the flame lit of a broad community of scholars.

7. The concern was raised that there is no system for recurrent review of courses once they have received certification as GE courses from the GE Governance Committee. I was not persuaded that this is a problem serious enough to call for a new regime of administrative review. I was persuaded, however, that what one

person called “soft monitoring” might be suitable. If Proposal #1 above is carried out conscientiously, it would be easy for the GE Governance Committee to examine the syllabi of all approved GE courses annually. Does the syllabus identify the course as a GE course? Does the syllabus articulate the objectives of general education? Does the syllabus identify course content and course orientation that continue to be consistent with the aims of general education? I would guess that in 90% or more of the cases, the answer to all three questions will be “yes.” If so, nothing more need be done – I would not even bother with a letter to the professor confirming this although that could serve as a useful reminder to the professor – especially if the course has changed hands – that the course is indeed among those certified as fulfilling GE requirements. (There might be an easier way to do this sort of “reminder”: a simple letter of thanks each year from the GE Governance Committee or, better still, the Vice Provost, to the faculty member who has taught a course that meets GE requirements.) If the answer to one or more of the questions is “no,” then a friendly email or phone call would be in order, asking that the instructor submit a revised and improved syllabus for the next year to maintain GE certification.

8. A separate issue is the interest of some undergraduate students – an interest that Acting Dean of Social Sciences Reynaldo Macias in principle endorsed, that GE requirements include a “diversity” requirement. UCLA is apparently the only UC campus without an explicit “diversity” requirement in general education. From both the students and Dean Macias, there is a desire that the goal of learning about social diversity in contemporary American life be more visible.

Reviewing the syllabi of the GE courses, there is no question that the vast majority of them deal directly and substantially with central issues concerning diversity – in some cases the primary topic is about race, in others class, in others gender or sexual orientation. In still others, the focal point of the course concerns diversity on a global scale and provides a deep examination of one or more societies other than the United States, notably including societies from which so many recent immigrants to the United States come. While I recognize the admirable desire of students and others to inoculate UCLA students against racism and other forms of intolerance – and to announce through a GE requirement that UCLA is thereby dedicated to the goal of a world made safe for diversity – I do not see that this would substantively change GE course offerings or even students’ choices among them.

By the same token, I do not see any harm in requiring students to fulfill a “diversity requirement” with one of their three “Society and Culture” courses – if diversity is appropriately defined. The student who spoke to us insisted that a diversity requirement must focus exclusively on diversity in the contemporary world and, if I understood him correctly, diversity in the contemporary United States. In a globalizing world, I have questions about the U.S.-centrism of that definition. As someone who does historical research and has taught courses focused on periods other than the contemporary, I find the presentism of this view

unduly narrow. I do not think I have ever taught a course more relevant to diversity in contemporary American life than when I taught a course on the civil rights movement and focused the course on the first volume of Taylor Branch's biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. The course content thus centered on a period ending a generation before the students in my class were born. When I looked at a UCLA GE course syllabus on sexuality in ancient Greece, I could quickly recognize the relevance of the course to shaking up preconceptions about sexual difference and sexual orientation today – while also provoking students to fulfill the mission of a GE “Society and Culture” course in examining “how issues are objectified for study, how data is collected and analyzed, and how new understandings of social phenomena are achieved and evaluated” – and how “humans...govern their diverse societies and cultures over time.” A quick review of the courses that are accredited for the “American Cultures” requirement at Berkeley or the “Ethnicity” requirement at UC-Santa Barbara that courses focused exclusively on other historical periods, even on periods we can know only through archeological evidence, are included.

What, then, to recommend? I see nothing but good will on the part of faculty involved in GE here, and I see nothing but good will – and some impatience – on the part of students (although we only spoke with one) who have raised the issue. I think a review of the diversity requirements at the other UC campuses and perhaps other institutions would be a useful first step. Such a review might well find one or more versions of a diversity requirement to be worth emulating; or it might find the emphasis in all GE courses in “Society and Culture” at UCLA on both “diverse societies and cultures over time” and on how human beings gather knowledge about them (thus problematizing how we know or think we know as well as what we know about) already satisfies the substantive aim of a diversity requirement, perhaps better than at other institutions (since it requires three courses, not one). It is always disappointing to conclude that “more research is needed” but, in this case, I think more research is needed.