NOTES

The Chair of the University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC-GEC) provided an overview of the agenda and brought two handouts to the committee’s attention. The first handout contained Senate resolutions about the work of ULAC that were passed when the most recent revisions to the GEC, i.e., a 5-hour reduction and increased choice in the breadth areas, were adopted. Specifically, course-taking patterns in the breadth categories were to be monitored to evaluate the effects of the changes for students entering under the new requirements autumn 2007. If the information were available, it would help inform the current work of the committee. The time-line, however, is such that the first cohort of students under the new GEC requirements is not expected to graduate in large numbers until 2011 and 2012, well after the committee needs to make recommendations for general education under semesters. The
second handout provided examples of majors across the university with respect to hours, pre-
requisites, and special GEC requirements. While the data were based on previous GEC
requirements and a minimum of 191 quarter hours, the information nonetheless demonstrated the
limited flexibility many students have in choosing GEC courses. Such restrictions often occur in
structured programs which need to meet external accreditation requirements.

Dr. William I. Brustein, Vice Provost for Global Strategies and International Affairs, joined the
committee to talk about ongoing initiatives and his ideas for internationalizing the curriculum. He
joined Ohio State to provide strategic leadership for institutional globalization, and has been
spearheading efforts to establish a physical presence in three international locations: Eastern
Asia, India, and South America. Rather than building universities abroad, he is working to create
multi-functional offices in international locations that map with the institution’s strengths. The
gateways can then facilitate a variety of endeavors that include research, teaching, and
outreach, and allow the institution to adapt to changing needs and interests more quickly.

On the curricular front, Vice Provost Brustein believes that it is essential students graduate with
foundational skills that will ensure they can work effectively in an international setting, be aware
of and adapt to diverse cultures, communicate across cultures, be familiar with global issues, and
have an enhanced comprehension and international dimension in their field of study. Along a
continuum, embedding international issues into the general education curriculum is a first step,
minor and certificates are a level higher, adding International Studies as a second major
provides even greater depth, and the ideal would be to work with departments to add an
international dimension for every major. These could include capstone experiences with an
international component or study abroad. He also strongly endorses assessment of student
learning about international issues. He is currently working with a rubric / test of global
competence, and plans to pilot its usefulness for monitoring and helping improve outcomes for this
skill.

The chair next re-opened the discussion of the architecture for the GEC. He noted that time
constraints would make it difficult to pursue thematic approaches in a potentially revised GEC.
He again framed two perspectives for presenting general education requirements: a smaller core
all students would take and which individual colleges could add to, or a larger set of
requirements which would need rationales for reductions. The committee had favored a reduced
core in a straw vote. He noted that no attempt is being made for programs to re-negotiate prior
agreements, such as restating reasons for not having a foreign language requirement.

The chair distributed two revised general education templates for discussion based on feedback
from the previous meeting. The templates differed by the number of courses required across
categories with and without ‘Foreign Language,’ and showed what the resulting percentage of a
student’s degree requirements would be in general education based on a minimum 121-unit
degree. Substitution options were also suggested for deliberation.

While the committee had previously endorsed a reduced core, arguments were made in many
instances for maintaining current requirements, and possibly increasing them in some instances.
Having an ‘integrated seminar’ (capstone) seemed to have more support as an option than as a
requirement. It was suggested that Foreign Language be rephrased as World Language. And a
case was made that for Arts and Sciences, the language requirement should be a fundamental
part of the core, not ‘added back.’ The discussion will be continued at the next meeting.