The Chair of the University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC-GEC) reported that he had met with the Arts and Sciences (A&S) Senate and Committee on Curriculum and Instruction (CCI) to share ULAC’s progress to date. He reported wide-spread support for making changes in the GE curriculum to meet the needs of students in the 21st century, and to have a framework/architecture that was concise but permitted some flexibility.

Next, the Chair reported the feedback A&S CCI gave on the Curricular Statement document. The CCI suggested that commentary which distinguishes general education from specialized study precede the specific learning goals, and that familiar language for describing depth of
knowledge, such as majors and minors, be used in place of specialized study. Under knowledge expected outcomes, the CCI recommended that the language be refined to convey the idea of intellectual domains of knowledge rather than major specific disciplines. The statement might also be amended to indicate that the curricular experience should contribute to student success. Finally, ways to promote visual symmetry, such as including bullet points under knowledge, was encouraged. The task group working on the curricular statement was asked to take the above feedback under consideration and report back to the full ULAC committee.

The Chair then led a discussion as to what the specific content/course requirements for GE should be. He incorporated feedback on the ‘Crunch’ framework that had been reviewed at the previous meeting into a revised framework labeled ‘Sundae Bar.’ To move the discussion forward, the Chair recommended that the ‘currency’ for outlining the GE should be ‘courses,’ with the assumption that most GE courses would likely be 3-unit/credit semester courses. He asked members to consider what they thought must be the minimum course requirements for graduates.

The committee stepped through the previously discussed requirements and additional ones brought up at the meeting. Following discussion, the committee concurred with the following recommendations. Under Writing, two courses should be the minimum required and would likely be the current English 110 and all 367 semester course successors. Under Math and Logical Skills, the current math proficiency and one additional math course should be required, and a data analysis course. Under Natural Sciences, one biological and one physical science course should be the minimum, one of which should include a lab. Requiring a sequence was not endorsed, in part because two semesters of science would be expected to equate with the current three quarter requirement. Under Arts and Humanities, one history, one literature, and one arts course should be required. The literature and arts are the current requirements. Only one history rather than the current two courses was recommended, in part because a semester course version is longer than a quarter version. The new recommendation would also be more consistent with several peer institutions that require either only one or no history course. Under social sciences, three courses were thought to be necessary to align with the Ohio Board of Regents requirements, as well as with the current three sub-categories.

The committee then discussed how to address additional breadth, and suggested two additional GE courses be taken, perhaps as student choice. Other alternatives for breadth were mentioned, such as world studies courses and minors. The committee also debated how to formulate any ‘international’ study requirement. Options discussed included world studies course or foreign languages requirements, and/or including options for study abroad. Under world languages per se, semester-based current proficiency requirements were favored by the majority of the committee. It was noted that due to difficulty, some languages may have greater hour requirements than others to reach the same proficiency level.

The committee will continue to discuss minimum requirements at the next meeting, and whether they will be prepared to make a recommendation to the Council on Academic Affairs before the end of the quarter. Several aspects for a shell still need to be addressed including the specifics for additional breadth requirements, current ‘0-count’ diversity requirements, and ways to encourage alternative in-depth and valued experiences such as study abroad, internships, and research endeavors.