The Chair of the University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC-GEC) provided an overview of the agenda and presented a revised framework for conceptualizing the general education (GE) requirements that the committee discussed at its previous meeting. The Chair indicated he would like confirmation of the requirements and for the committee to discuss both additional breadth and ‘0-count’ requirements (i.e., content requirements that could be embedded in other GE courses and would not necessarily add course/credit-hours).

The new framework for displaying GE course requirements consisted of several holding bins, or pails/buckets, that could be filled with distinct kinds of course. The labels tentatively proposed for the bins were: Expression, Analysis, and Interpretation. Proposed courses for the Expression
bin included those that would fulfill the two writing, the literature, and the arts recommended course requirements. Proposed courses for the Analysis bin included the recommended math, data analysis, and the biological and physical science course requirements. Finally proposed courses for the Interpretation bin included the one historical study and three social science courses that had been suggested. The three bins as described could potentially constitute a minimum universal GE and would represent approximately 31% of the minimum requirements for a bachelor’s degree using a 3-unit/credit course assumption for most GE courses. A separate 'International Studies' bin was proposed for the language requirements. While the committee endorsed the specific course requirements, and appreciated having a conceptual framework for organizing the diverse requirements, there was debate about the particular labels. Further, it was suggested that the International Studies bin be depicted as part of the overall GE requirements rather than separate, along with a notation that a world language requirement would be required only in some colleges.

The remainder of the discussion focused primarily on potential '0-count' requirements. The committee noted that the current social diversity requirement is now widely embedded in many approved GEC courses and thus questioned whether a specific requirement should be continued. After discussion, the committee recommended maintaining the current social diversity and international issues requirements as ones which could be embedded in other GE courses. The committee believed it was important to highlight the need for student learning in these areas, and to reinforce the institution’s interest in globalizing the curriculum.

There was less support for adding other embedded course requirements such as visual literacy, technological literacy, moral reasoning, and sustainability. This was due in part to concerns about: how many of these added topics could/should be required, balanced with the need for increasing student choice; how much change could be supported, especially given an approved GE curriculum for these topics did not exist; and how necessary the requirements might be given little information was available as to whether students were already learning about these areas. If the committee decides in the future to require coursework on these topics, the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching can organize learning communities to help faculty define expected outcomes for them and develop a supporting curriculum.

The committee next discussed adding breadth requirements. If done, potential areas for consideration included the previous ‘cultures and ideas’ subcategory in humanities and additional history if the single history course requirement were kept. A proposal was brought to the committee for the GE history requirement to be set at an upper-level. Such a course would have a lower-level history course as a prerequisite which could be met through Advanced Placement (AP). Committee members pointed out the proposal would in essence be a two-course history requirement because many students enter without AP credit in history. Also, there was general opposition to having prerequisite requirements for GE courses other than those already explicitly incorporated in the stated GE requirements (e.g., the proposed two courses in writing, one of which is a prerequisite for the other). The proposal was therefore not endorsed. The committee also talked about whether current Ohio Board of Regents requirements of accepting AP credit of 3 could count toward general credit versus specific GE credit. The committee acknowledged that the intent of the Regents is clear and an AP score of 3 “…will meet a general education requirement if the course to which the AP credit is equivalent fulfills a requirement at the receiving institution” (Regents Directive 2008-010).
The meeting concluded with the announcement that the next scheduled meeting for December 11, 2009 will be canceled. The committee will reconvene on December 15, 2009. The group working on the curricular statement will continue to revise and edit the statement for subsequent full committee review.