

University-Wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) Report to Faculty Senate for January 26, 2026 Meeting

Submitted by Jeremy Vetter, Associate Professor of History, UWGEC Chair

The University-Wide General Education Committee (UWGEC) is a shared governance body with 22 members, most of whom are faculty members representing Colleges that are active in teaching General Education courses, along with two student representatives, three Foundations area representatives, a library representative, and a chair appointed in consultation between the Chair of the Faculty and the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. A list of current UWGEC members can be found here: <https://ge.arizona.edu/gened-committee/uwgec-members>.

Since my last report, UWGEC has held three meetings, on December 3 and December 17, 2025, and on January 21, 2026. In addition to our usual, ongoing work of approving course proposals for General Education, at the December 3 meeting we also approved a process for existing courses to opt-in for the new Understand and Value Difference attribute by submitting at least one course objective related to the new attribute, or opt out and drop the DE attribute. This will likely occur during the spring 2026 semester. With the implementation of two new attributes during fall 2025 – Civic Exploration; Understand and Value Difference – we now have five attributes available. **Even though students are no longer required to track their completion of attributes, these are still an integral part of all Exploring Perspectives, Building Connections, and Civic Institutions courses**, and one or two attributes must be present in a course for it to be approved in these categories.

We also discussed the proposed change to Course Substitutions policy for Gen Ed courses, which we then approved after considerable discussion at the December 17 meeting. This policy change, which is distinct from transfer policy, applies only to requests by students to substitute another University of Arizona course to meet a Gen Ed requirement. It would shift the authority for granting substitution requests away from the colleges, typically through their advisors, and instead assign it to the Office of General Education, in order to ensure consistency in how substitutions are granted and also guaranteeing that Gen Ed substitutions, once granted, are recognized across the University even if a student switches majors or colleges. At the request of the Academic Advising Council, the amended version of the proposal removed a potential provision that would have required such substitution requests to be granted before a course is taken.

At the December 17 and January 21 meetings, we continued to make substantial progress on the time-sensitive **implementation of the new Civic Learning requirements**, approved by Faculty Senate on October 6. Following some initial discussion of proposals for the new Civic Institutions category on December 17, we began formally reviewing them at the January 21 meeting. We have been challenged by unexpectedly long delays, which we did not anticipate and which are outside the control of the Office of General Education, in the updating of UAccess to receive Gen Ed proposals for the new category and attributes that we voted to establish in the fall. These IT issues in reconfiguring the back-end, internal functioning of the routing and document attachment procedures, have made it difficult for proposers to submit their proposals, even though many of them were ready to submit in December, as we had hoped. However, Curricular Affairs was able to devise a workaround for two Civic Institutions courses and seven existing Gen Ed courses seeking to add the Civic Exploration attribute, all of which were ready to submit in early December.

The two Civic Institutions courses already approved at our January 21 meeting are two longstanding courses that had already been presented to ABOR several years ago as likely candidates for meeting the new requirement, due to their close overlap with the seven ABOR American Institutions required areas (see Appendix A below): POL 201 American National Government, and HIST 150C3 U.S. Society and Institutions. The first of these has been conditionally approved pending a few final revisions, which are expected to be verified very soon, and the second course has already been approved with suggestions. Thus, it is hoped these two course options, at least, will be available when the new incoming students arrive in fall 2026 and are subject to the new catalog requirement to take a course in Civic Institutions. We are aware of at least five additional courses already prepared for review for Civic Institutions, two of which have been submitted through UAccess but are encountering the IT issues mentioned above, and the others ready to submit as soon as the system can accept them. It is possible some of these courses could be reviewed in time for fall 2026, depending on the timeline for resolution of the back-end issues and other factors. Several additional courses are in various stages of preparation by the offering academic units, with a deadline of March 1 for reviewing in advance of spring 2027 initial offering. As proposed by the Office of General Education in early October, we are anticipating the full rollout of a wider range of options for Civic Institutions in spring 2027. But the availability of a few courses in fall 2026, which were already going to be offered anyway, will enable those students who want to take this requirement immediately upon arrival at the University to do so, though there will be many more students taking their Civic Institutions course starting in spring 2027 and beyond. Working through our course proposal reviews for Civic Institutions will continue to be a priority during the rest of the spring semester. Faculty who are interested in proposing such a course are encouraged to

complete an online interest form to receive course development guidance:
<https://ge.arizona.edu/civics>. Further information about the expectations for Civic Institutions courses is also available at the same website.

The other part of the civic implementation is the Civic Exploration (depth) attribute, which is also described on this website. The new CE attribute can be attached to Exploring Perspectives and Building Connections courses that are proposed for Gen Ed. Since the CE attribute only requires addressing one of the 7 ABOR areas (as opposed to the Civic Institutions category courses, which require all 7 of them) it is expected that a much wider range of courses will be able to engage with civic learning through the attribute. As faculty across campus are developing new Gen Ed proposals, we encourage them to consider the CE attribute as a possibility. It is also possible to add the CE attribute to an existing, previously approved GE course. As I mentioned in a previous report, there was a special window open through December for an initial cohort of existing Gen Ed courses to add the CE attribute through a simplified process, for initial rollout of the attribute for fall 2026.

We are grateful to faculty who contributed proposals to the initial effort, especially since nearly all of the courses were previously approved for Gen Ed and had another attribute already. I tried to contribute a few courses myself to help advance the initial effort, but special thanks is due to these other faculty, beyond the Gen Ed committee, whose efforts on short notice demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to helping us implement the new civic curriculum: Michelle Berry, Kendal Blust, Jan Lauren Boyles, Susan Crane, Theresa Crimmins, Frank Gonzalez, Katie Hemphill, Katherine Morrissey, Alex Nunez, Jennie McStotts, David Quanrud, Katy Prudic, and Ray Smith. The existing Gen Ed courses in the initial cohort with the CE attribute include HIST 102: Tucson Matters: Making History with Community Museum; HIST 111: History Behind the News; HIST 247 Nature and Technology in U.S. History; HNRS 212: Narratives of the Southwest; HRTS 200: Introduction to Human Rights; JOUR 150C1: News in Society; and RNR 150C1: Sustainable Earth.

Beyond the initial cohort of civic implementation courses, since the last report UWGEC has also approved the following courses for addition to the General Education curriculum:

ANTH 351 To Boldly Go: Understanding Anthropology Through Science Fiction (EP-Social Scientist, Writing attribute)

ANTH 353 The Anthropology of Food (EP-Social Scientist, Writing attribute)

ANTH 364 Natural History of Our Closest Relatives (EP-Natural Scientist, QR attribute)

CPH/GHI 315 Sustainable Health Diets (EP-Social Scientist, Writing attribute)

HPS 316 Global Food Systems and Human Health (EP-Social Scientist, Writing attribute)

JUS 220 Judaism and Global Ecology: From Ancient Ethics to Contemporary Environmentalism (EP-Humanist, WCS Attribute)

LAS/GLS 227 Art and Activism in the Borderlands (EP-Artist, WCS attribute)

MENA/PRS 285 The Jews of Persia: History, Culture, Identity (BC, WCS and Writing attributes)

PHIL 350 Miracles, Mysticism, and Meaningful Coincidences (EP-Humanist, Writing attribute)

Note: BC = Building Connections; CE = Civic Engagement; CI = Civic Institutions; EP = Exploring Perspectives; QR = Quantitative Reasoning; UVD = Understand and Value Difference; WCS = World Cultures & Societies

If anyone has questions about this, or any of the above, please contact me (jvetter@arizona.edu) and I will be happy to explain anything further or convey your feedback and comments to UWGEC.

Appendix A: Excerpt from ABOR Policy 2-210

“The study of American Institutions will include at minimum (I) how the history of the United States continues to shape the present; (II) the basic principles of American constitutional democracy and how they are applied under a republican form of government; (III) the United States Constitution and major American constitutional debates and developments; (IV) the essential founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of American Institutions of self-governance; (V) landmark Supreme Court cases that have shaped law and society; (VI) the civic actions necessary for effective citizenship and civic participation in a self-governing society – for example civil dialog and civil disagreement; and (VII) basic economic knowledge to critically assess public policy options and to inform professional and personal decisions.”