Clarifying the Changing Expectations for General Education

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) request that a joint task force of representatives from the ASCSU and CSU Chancellor's Office be established to address the pedagogical shift towards outcome-focused assessment, greater alignment of co-curricular activities with learning outcomes, and the need for systematic assessment of General Education (GE) through program review; and be it further.

RESOLVED: The ASCSU request a preliminary report of actions to come forward at the November 2013 Meeting of the ASCSU; and be it further.

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the CSU campus Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, CSU campus Senate Chairs, and the California State Student Association (CSSA).

RATIONALE: There is a disconnect between the expectations for General Education as derived from the wording in Title 5, Executive Order 1065, and GE Guiding Notes. The Title 5 language regarding General Education (Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Sections 40402.1, 40403, 40405, 40405.1, 40405.2, 40405.4, and 40508) is most often interpreted in the context of Executive Order 1065 (September 16, 2011) as further informed by the latest (continuously updated) revisions to the CSU Guiding Notes. The direction provided in the guiding notes is historically focused on evaluating individual courses against content as informed by prior review cycle interpretation of content described in Title 5 and the executive order. Given that the language in the later documents was written with a content rather than outcome focus, it is unsurprising that the guiding notes content is similarly content-focused. With the development of a stronger assessment knowledge base and more holistic approaches to GE becoming prevalent, it argues for the merits of looking at revisioning and refocusing GE-based guidance. In this context it is noted that the GE-related descriptions within Title 5 have been described as both dated and underspecified.

Additionally, it is noted that true programmatic assessment of GE as a program has been mandated since 2008 (with the introduction of Executive Order 1033, since replaced by Executive Order 1065) and yet there have been no strong examples of programmatic assessment across GE from any individual campus.
"The Give Students a COMPASS" project has yielded many positive results with integrative learning among other high impact practices in producing more intentional learning and greater engagement along with concomitant increases in retention and graduation rates – these (and other) high impact practices are currently, typically seen as an overlay to GE and as potentially diluting content area requirements.

Approved Unanimously – May 17, 2013