The General Education Committee met 11 times during the fall and spring semesters. Committee members included Susan Kattwinkel (chair, Theatre and Dance), Matthew Cressler (Religious Studies), Susan Divine (Hispanic Studies), Allison Jones (Library), Alex Kasman (Mathematics), Chris Mothorpe (Economics), Emily Skinner (Teacher Education), Lynne Ford (ex-officio, Academic Affairs), Gia Quesada (ex-officio Fall semester, General Education Coordinator), Karen Smail (ex-officio Spring semester, General Education Coordinator), Ryan Thompson (SGA representative).

The bulk of the committee’s work for the year fell into four categories: 1) Reviewing courses submitted by departments to fulfill General Education requirements; 2) Discussing the Math/Logic Alternative courses and recruiting courses to fulfill that requirement; 3) Advocating for a General Education section of the college website; 4) Discussing proposals for a diversity requirement as part of General Education with members of the student I-CAN (Intersectional Cougar Action Network) group.

1. The committee reviewed 15 proposals for the Humanities requirement and sent 13 of them forward to the Senate, all of which passed. We sent one proposal for the Math requirement to the Senate, which passed. We approved the deactivation of the courses in Hindi as General Education courses. Four of the Humanities courses passed were study abroad courses, and one was a study away (in Washington, D.C.) course.

2. The committee spoke with Deb Mihal from Disability Services and Kristen Ashworth from Teacher Education about what types of courses are needed for the Math/Logic Alternative courses and how departments might help to provide them. Committee members reached out to the Math department, Computer Science department, and the Finance department to have conversations about the possibilities and to encourage proposals. Although there were no proposals forthcoming this year, both Computer Science and Finance expressed an interest in creating proposals next year. The Math department expressed an interest in teaching a special section of Math 104 aimed at students who qualify for the alternative. The faculty member who was being recruited to teach that course was unable to do it this year, but may be able to in the future.

3. Early in the year the committee began suggesting content for a page on the college website explaining and contextualizing the General Education program for current and prospective students. Such content might include information about how the program supports the College’s liberal arts and sciences focus, explanation of the student learning outcomes, testimonial videos from students regarding their Gen Ed courses, and a support video from President Hsu. Despite significant evidence on similar content on other college websites, the Marketing administration denied our request for a stand-alone page on General Education. But Registrar Mary Bergstrom agreed to put the student learning outcomes on the General Education pages in the course catalog.
4. The student group I-CAN attended our meeting on March 1st to present their initial proposals for a diversity requirement as part of the General Education curriculum. They were cognizant of the lengthy process of such a proposal and suggested several methods for starting the conversation on campus and for piloting relevant courses. The committee agreed on the importance of continuing the conversation and presented a statement to the Faculty Senate in support of making it a campus-wide conversation.

A couple of discussions that had been suggested by last year’s committee fell by the wayside as other items took priority. The committee did not continue discussions started by the 17-18 committee about developing a new General Education assessment cycle. Post SACS approval, campus-wide pressure has diminished somewhere and the committee did not feel outside pressure to make the issue a priority. The committee also did not continue the last committee’s General Education month discussions begun by the previous committee, for much the same reason. This year’s committee was very invested, however, in finding ways to increase awareness of the General Education program campus-wide, and the website being worked on may be a more concrete and inclusive way of forwarding those conversations that were happening in General Education month.

We recommend that next year’s committee focus on the following items early in the academic year:

- Following up with the Math, Computer Science, and Finance departments to encourage Math/Logic Alternative proposals and pedagogically-appropriate sections of existing Math courses.
- Approaching Academic Affairs with a request to create a General Education page for students under the www.cofc.edu/academics header and link to it from all relevant pages on the website.
- Finding ways to ensure that General Education is prominently positioned in the College’s 250th celebrations.
- Using the research provided by I-CAN to begin a discussion of a diversity requirement as part of General Education.