



MEMORANDUM

To: Division of Academic Affairs Personnel
From: Dr. Bob Kolvoord, Interim Provost
CC: Dr. James Schmidt, President
Date: April 22, 2026
RE: General Education Governance

As we move forward with implementation of the new General Education curriculum, we need to make some revisions in the governance structure to ensure instructional faculty are at the center of decision making, support good shared governance practices, and streamline bureaucratic processes. As such, after broad consultation with the Faculty Senate, the General Education Council, Academic Council (AC), AUHs, and A-Deans, we are making the following changes to the governance structure of the General Education Program.

OVERVIEW

The General Education Program will continue to report through the Office of Faculty Affairs and Curriculum to Vice Provost Elizabeth Oldmixon. Effective August 1, 2026, the program will be *governed* by a new faculty governance committee, the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC). As it is now, the program will be *administered* by the Director of General Education/Associate Vice Provost, in partnership with the GEOC, Student Academic Success (SAS), and the colleges within the Division of Academic Affairs.ⁱ

Effective Spring 2027, Dr. Rudy Molina's office, SAS, will be responsible for assessing seat needs, working in consultation with the Gen Ed team. In close collaboration with academic units, dean's offices will coordinate General Education offerings within their colleges to ensure that an appropriate number of seats is offered each semester, based on SAS-generated seat assessment data.

GEOC PERSONNEL

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The GEOC will be comprised of 20 voting members:

- Fourteen instructional faculty members representing the faculty in each academic college (two per college).ⁱⁱ Nominations, including self-nominations, will be submitted to each college governance committee. Governance committees will vet nominees and forward a list of acceptable nominees to the dean.
 - The dean will appoint two college representatives from among nominees vetted and deemed acceptable by the governance committee.

- College representatives must come from different academic units within the college.
- All instructional faculty on tenured, tenure-track, and RTA appointments are eligible to serve. Experience with the General Education Program is preferred but not required.
- One at-large instructional faculty member appointed by the provost
- One at-large instructional faculty member appointed by the speaker of the Faculty Senate
- One member from JMU Libraries appointed by the dean
- One member from the Honors College appointed by the dean
- One advising representative appointed by the director of University Advising
- One instructional faculty member from University Studies/SPCE appointed jointly by the deans

The committee will also include two non-voting members:

- One undergraduate student appointed by the Student Government Association
- The director of General Education

CHAIRS

At the May meeting, the voting members of the GEOC shall elect an instructional faculty co-chair for the following academic year. Their term will start July 1, although they will not typically have committee responsibilities over the summer. The General Education director will be the administrative co-chair.

LIAISONS

In support of the GEOC's work, the committee co-chairs will work with AUHs/supervisors to recruit liaisons from academic units, the Libraries, and University Advising. Academic unit liaisons shall be instructional faculty; Libraries and University Advising Liaisons may be A&P faculty. Liaisons will be appointed by AUHs/supervisors for renewable one-year terms, in consultation with unit personnel (as applicable). Nominations and self-nominations will be welcome. Members of the GEOC may serve as the liaison for their respective units.

Liaisons will facilitate communication between the faculty and the GEOC and raise awareness of program developments. They will regularly update the faculty in their units on Gen Ed developments. Liaisons will also provide the GEOC with subject-matter expertise as the committee reviews curriculum proposals. Liaisons may attend GEOC meetings, but this is not required. They will receive regular updates from the GEOC to share with their constituency group.

WORKLOAD

Service on the GEOC and/or as a liaison shall be considered university service and accounted for as a component of one's assigned workload.

TERMS AND REPRESENTATION

Voting members of the GEOC shall serve a two-year renewable term. Seats will be divided into two groups to evenly distribute committee turnover. (Initial groups will be determined by random draw.) The undergraduate representative will serve a one-year renewable term.

GEOC RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCESSES

COMMITTEE CHARGE

Working in the spirit of collegiality, shared governance and a commitment to a broad liberal arts education, the GEOC oversees the General Education curriculum on behalf of all instructional faculty.

The committee reviews proposed changes to the General Education curriculum, including learning objectives and program requirements, and ensures that proposed courses align with the established learning objectives. Moreover, individual committee members shall communicate regularly with their constituency group(s)—including liaisons and deans, if applicable—regarding program developments. The committee has sole jurisdiction to determine whether General Education courses align with program learning objectives and are appropriate to include in the General Education curriculum.

The GEOC may recommend changes to program requirements, i.e., learning objectives, required hours, and structure, on a second reading by 2/3 vote of present committee members. There must be at least 30 days between the first and second reading to ensure the speaker, the provost, AC, and instructional faculty are given the opportunity to provide feedback. Changes to program requirements require approval from the Committee on Academic Programs and the provost.

The GEOC will also:

- Develop and disseminate criteria for evaluating new courses and course revisions.ⁱⁱⁱ This includes the development of a General Education Handbook with program procedures and personnel responsibilities. The handbook will be subject to approval by the provost.^{iv}
- Work in partnership with the director of General Education to develop and implement procedures for assessment of the core learning objectives across the General Education curriculum.
- Collaborate with all appropriate constituencies, including the Faculty Senate, AC, the provost, and CAP on changes and improvements to the General Education curriculum.
- Report to AC, CAP, and the Faculty Senate on decisions made and issues arising in the oversight of the General Education curriculum.
- Regularly review processes and governance structures for feasibility.

VOTING RULES AND OTHER PRACTICES

- The committee must have at least twelve voting members present to conduct business.
- Non-voting members may participate in deliberations.
- The committee shall operate by Robert's Rules of Order. Modifications must be approved by a simple majority of present, voting-eligible committee members.
- The committee may use a consent agenda.
- GEOC meeting agendas shall be determined by the co-chairs and meetings shall be open to the University community.
- The committee shall only consider proposals properly vetted in accordance with unit- and college-level curriculum processes and approved by the relevant dean(s). Curricular proposals from non-academic units, such as the Libraries or University Advising, may be offered in partnership with an academic unit. When academic unit-level partnership is not possible, curricular proposals from non-academic units may be considered at the discretion of the directors.

CONSULTATION AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE

The GEOC co-chairs will assign committee members to serve as consultants for each of the program components: Launch, The Core, Engaged Citizenship and Democracy, and Connection. Consultants will work with and assist faculty as they develop or revise courses for the curriculum. *Faculty are required to confer with a consultant before submitting a new course or course revision to the GEOC for consideration.*

Consultants shall confer with appropriate unit liaisons to solicit feedback on the curricular change to ensure alignment of course content, learning objectives, and subject-matter expertise. “Appropriate” liaisons include liaisons from all units that currently offer courses in the program component area being considered for change and any other liaisons the consultant deems necessary. Liaisons are encouraged to consult with the faculty in their unit to solicit feedback. The decision to incorporate feedback is ultimately at the discretion of the submitter, and the decision to adopt the curricular change is at the discretion of the GEOC.

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- ⁱ Through AY 2027-28, the program will be administered by two co-directors; see email sent 4/7/26.
 - ⁱⁱ In AY 2029-30, the GEOC will consider whether to develop a proportional model of college representation based on students served and/or faculty participation and make a recommendation to the provost.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ In the implementation phase, the committee will consider developing fixed deadlines, twice per semester, for the submission of curriculum proposals.
 - ^{iv} This should include language indicating that the Provost’s Office will facilitate a faculty-led review of the curriculum every 10 years.