Break-out Group Reports

**Break-out Group 1**  
*General Education Goals and How to Achieve Them*

*Members: Rodney Mauricio (Chair), William Finlay (Vice Chair), Tucker Brown, Charles Bullock, William Davis, Nancy Felson, Sharron Hannon, David Knauft, Karin Myhre, Teresa O’Neal, Marisa Pagnattaro, Judith Willis*

1.1 The General Education subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) should continue to **review courses** to ensure that they are adequately satisfying the general education requirements.

   COMMENTS: Ranked 6th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.2 The University should encourage departments to develop **new courses** that will serve as a central core of a new general education requirement. These courses will be focused and emphasize how knowledge is constructed in that area of inquiry.

   COMMENTS: Ranked 4th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.3 Establish the expectation that graduating students be able to **communicate effectively in a second language**. In establishing these expectations, carefully consider the feasibility of implementation.

   COMMENTS: Ranked 2nd out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.4 Continue to develop and expand **international education** opportunities such as exchange programs and low cost international classes and trips. Additionally, raise funds to provide scholarships for international education opportunities.

   COMMENTS: Ranked 5th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.5 Incorporate significant **writing assignments** into more courses across the university so that students are exposed to rigorous writing experiences throughout their undergraduate career.

   COMMENTS: Ranked the top priority of recommendations in this section. We recommend this be implemented.
1.6. Expand the current system that designates selected classes as “writing intensive” or containing a “writing component” across the university.

COMMENTS: Ranked 10th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.7. Expand the number of classes that require students to engage in oral argument, formal presentations, simulations and other forms of role-playing, and classroom discussions.

COMMENTS: Ranked 9th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.8. Students must select at least two courses with a significant quantitative component.

COMMENTS: Ranked 7th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.9. Expand the requirements for science and make science classes for non-majors more engaging by developing the connections between science and society.

COMMENTS: Ranked 8th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.10. Recognizing that it is important for all students to be able to locate, evaluate and use information resources in a wide variety of formats, encourage efforts to incorporate these skills into the curriculum and support the Division of Academic Enhancement, Libraries, EITS, OISD and other academic support units in providing opportunities for students to acquire these skills.

COMMENTS: Ranked 11th out of 11 in priority. We recommend this be implemented.

1.11. Elevate the importance of ethics education already being taught by university faculty by including in the curriculum an ethics component that is either embedded in existing courses or placed in a newly created course.

COMMENTS: Ranked 3rd out of 11 in priority

Additional Comments and/or Recommendations:

The group supports all 11 recommendations. The main concern was that we should reconfigure the new core curriculum so as not to add to the hours currently devoted to the core (i.e., no net change in hours). We must take care not to impinge on courses in the major (particularly in professional schools, where accrediting is issue). We can do this by counting upper-level courses toward satisfaction of core curriculum requirements and having more courses satisfy multiple core areas.

Additionally, a campus conversation should be initiated wherein the faculty will have a collective responsibility to identify in each of our courses how these general education
goals are being addressed. The Administration will have to direct resources to departments participating in these efforts—additional faculty lines and teaching assistantships. The Administration may have to request special dispensation for flexibility from Board of Regents.

**Break-out Group 2**

*Improving Academic Rigor and Standards*

*Members: David Williams (Chair), Woody Beck (Vice Chair), Wyatt Anderson, Marsha Black, Cain Harrelson, Arthur Grider, Rhett Jackson, Loris Magnani, David Radcliffe, Lynn Sallot, Robert Shewfelt, Mark Wheeler*

2.1. **Allow access to 3000+ level courses** for undergraduate students wishing to count upper-level courses toward satisfaction of general education requirements, providing those students have the necessary prerequisites.

**COMMENTS:** Low priority compared to other recommendations.

2.2. **Modify undergraduate major requirements** to enhance the ability of students to take courses outside of their discipline and recommend that departments engaged in undergraduate education **examine their major requirements** to ensure that they are providing their students with a broad, general education.

**COMMENTS:** Medium priority compared to other recommendations. It is a good idea to ask departments to examine what may be possible for their discipline, but “one size does not fit all” and disciplines are too diverse for a uniform rule.

2.3. **Develop a plan to ensure that students who are able to exempt core classes with Advanced Placement (AP) credit** formulate a plan of accountability that will ensure replacement courses are ones that will further their participation in rigorous academic coursework.

**COMMENTS:** Medium priority compared to other recommendations. For those students who do bring in AP credit, this is a good idea. However, the different ways AP credit is used (exemption and placement) should be factored in. The role that AP credit plays in recruitment should be weighed carefully. Any change in AP policy should not create a disincentive for a student to take AP in high school and to choose UGA.

2.4. **Provide a means for undergraduate students to integrate their previous years of learning** by requiring all colleges to develop and implement department-specific **Final-Year Capstone Experience** programs.

**COMMENTS:** High priority compared to other recommendations. We suggest using
existing capstone requirements in departments and programs as models.

2.5. Increase funding to a competitive grants program to assist students in completing research projects as part of a capstone experience.

COMMENTS: High priority compared to other recommendations.

2.6 Require First-year students to participate in the First-year seminar program. These seminars should emphasize the importance of learning and academics as well as expose students to top faculty

COMMENTS: Medium priority compared to other recommendations. This should not require, but rather encourage first-year seminar participation; it should not be limited to being a first-year seminar program. Such seminars should be part of faculty load. We suggest the following modifications in the language of the recommendation: “Encourage First-year students to participate in the First-year seminar program and other innovative seminars that emphasize the importance of learning and academics as well as expose students to top faculty.”

Additional Comments and/or Recommendations:

Additional Recommendation: “The task force should examine the issue of ‘grade inflation’ and include some statement on the issue as part of its report when delivered to the Provost.” This would be a high priority recommendation if it were included in the report. Discussion of academic rigor and standards should include the issue of grade inflation. Should the report go before faculty groups without this matter being addressed it could compromise reception of the report. The examination of grade inflation should be data-based and systematic, not emotion-based.

Our concluding observation is that recommendations 4.1, 4.2, 5.2 have implications for academic rigor and we add our support for these recommendations. We also wish to emphasize that faculty should be encouraged to provide a sufficient amount of graded/evaluative homework for students. Additionally, they should be encouraged to discuss what the Culture of Honesty means in their particular classroom and discipline (e.g., “what does plagiarism mean in this particular course?”).

Break-out Group 3

Improving the Learning Environment

Members: Robert Boehmer (Chair), Joe Crim (Vice Chair), Pat Allen, Bruce Bongarten, Will Childs, Heidi Davison, Michelle Garfield, Jan Hathcote, Carole Middlebrooks, Sherrie Nist, Candice Sherman
3.1 Develop and implement an academic component to orientation that will thoroughly introduce incoming students to the university’s intellectual climate, academic expectations for students, and undergraduate general education plan.

COMMENTS: Ranked 1st out of 8 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. Further, we should expand this concept to include first year experience programs (i.e., throughout entire first year). We should also emphasize the importance of communicating expectations (academic, conduct, citizenship). For example, we need to communicate the expectation that students are citizens of this local community – not merely visitors. We should create corresponding opportunities for engagement in the community (e.g., internships in Athens-Clarke).

3.2 Expand the Mentoring Program across the university on a voluntary and college-specific basis

COMMENTS: Ranked 2nd out of 8 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. The recommendation language should expressly recognize the need to reward this activity in promotion and tenure process and in annual reviews. Also, we should build on existing successful mentoring models such as Honors, UGA Experience, and Academic Enhancement.

3.3 Increase students’ exposure to and participation in extracurricular cultural events and leadership activities. Provide rewards for students who participate in cultural events and engage in leadership activities.

COMMENTS: Ranked 3rd out of 8 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. We should assure that rewards are available to students in all academic units. Additionally, we should recommend specific awards likely to promote engagement (in addition to registration preference, consider housing preference and credit towards course completion). Rewards may be a useful tool to jumpstart this behavior, but we should exercise caution to avoid the trap of communicating that the reason for engaging in these activities is the reward. The goal is for students to experience the learning that occurs by reason of being engaged. Once engaged, participation in these events occurs naturally.

3.4 Renew university efforts to attract and publicize invigorating cultural events and important speakers.

COMMENTS: Ranked 5th out of 8 in priority. We recommend this be incorporated with the previous recommendation (recommendation 3.3) and implemented.

3.5 Expand residential learning community programs like the Creswell Learning Community and Franklin Residential College so that a larger number of first-year students may participate. Additionally, ensure that a common academic component
exists among all residential learning community programs to weave them together.

COMMENTS: Ranked 4th out of 8 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. Consider expanding this recommendation to extend to upper-division students.

3.6 Delay or defer the fraternity and sorority rush process so that students will be exposed to and established in their academic responsibilities before entering into social organizations. STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION

COMMENTS: Ranked 7th out of 8 in priority. We recommend that significant additional input be considered before adoption—do not adopt before that. The task force should keep the following advice in mind when considering this recommendation: Recognize the danger that reaction to this will negatively impact success of other recommendations; the data does not seem to support the argument that Greek rush negatively impacts student learning; consider whether rush is the “problem” or the intensity of pledge activity is the “problem”; evaluate whether better results could be achieved by modifying timing and nature of pledge activities and by actively engaging students who are pledging (e.g., advising targeted to students pledging); do not underestimate the logistical complexities of implementation.

3.7 Initiate a “Parental Notification” policy wherein parents of students who commit two or more alcohol-related offenses are promptly notified. *ADOPTED BY PRESIDENT’S CABINET ON FEBRUARY 3, 2004.

COMMENTS: Already adopted and implemented.

3.8 Initiate a “no cars” policy for all first-year students to encourage substantive connection and engagement with the university’s campus/intellectual climate. STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION

COMMENTS: Ranked 8th out of 8 in priority. We recommend that the task force consider alternative approaches to the non-academic aspects of this (e.g., other ways of alleviating parking issues). Additionally, the task force should recognize the danger that reaction to this will negatively impact success of other recommendations. Given the high percentage of our students from metro Atlanta, this will be extremely difficult to implement and enforce.

3.9 Expand the operating hours of the Main Library, Science Library, Student Learning Center, and Ramsey Student Center.

COMMENTS: Ranked 6th out of 8 in priority. We recommend this be implemented with caution. Recognize that this may have undesirable and/or unintended consequences if it is not implemented carefully (we do not want to encourage unhealthy behavior patterns such as sleep deprivation).
Additional Comments and/or Recommendations:

Specific recommendations about the impact of facilities and the IT environment on student learning should be included. Additionally, the report should stress the importance of continuing progress towards the strategic goal of increasing the number of student beds on campus to 12,000 because of the positive relationship between living on campus and academic success. It should also stress the importance of upgrading the older buildings on campus. Specific recommendations about reducing structural barriers to academic success should be included (e.g., update of course registration system, etc.).

In the “General Education” section of the task force report, we should state what we want each UGA graduate to know and be. Then, we should state the expected outcomes of each recommendation (e.g., how will it contribute to that desired outcome). Furthermore, faculty must understand the expectations being placed on students, accept that their active involvement is a sine qua non to success of the recommendations (increase student connectedness with faculty and staff), and must be confident that their active participation will be recognized and rewarded. Finally, in order to know if we have achieved the desired outcome, it is critical to know where we are now and to methodically collect data and periodically assess if we are closer to the mark. For each recommendation, state how we are going to evaluate our progress.

Break-out Group 4
Improving Pedagogical Infrastructure and Support

Members: Marguerite Koepke (Chair), John Ricketts (Vice Chair), Michelle Ballif, Michael Bender, Ben Coppedge, Ann Glausser, David Hayes, Charles Kutal, Larry Millard, Deborah Miller, Ron Walcott

4.1 More resources must be channeled toward hiring additional faculty members, so class sizes and student/faculty ratios decrease.

COMMENTS: Ranked the top priority in this section. We recommend this be implemented. Everything the task force wants to accomplish—more learning, more interaction, more thinking, more reading, more writing, better mentoring relationships—is contingent upon this recommendation. A baseline number for adding additional faculty (not retiree replacements) each year should be established. The University should organize a campaign for the funding to implement this. In allocating funding to departments to hire more faculty, do not just count majors, but count the number of students served (i.e., non-majors taking classes in that department, etc.). In addition to replacing traditional professorships that have been lost over recent years, the University should add “teacher” track positions that focus on workload (not just paying lip service by hiring “teachers” and then expecting them to do the same amount of research, etc.).
4.2 Renew efforts to implement the University Curriculum Committee’s recommendation to develop and implement a “plus-minus” grading system across the university to allow for better grade differentiation in academic performance and to strengthen the rigor of undergraduate courses.

COMMENTS: Ranked 2nd out of 6 in priority. We strongly recommend implementing this recommendation. The University should secure a spot on the Board of Regents agenda for this recommendation. In order to gather support for this recommendation, the task force should accumulate data from peer and aspirational institutions that have a plus-minus system and also from student and faculty surveys.

4.3 Reduce the time period of Drop/Add for undergraduates while also taking steps to prevent students from temporarily overloading for the purpose of “course shopping” during the registration phase.

COMMENTS: Ranked 3rd out of 6 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. Consider changing the closing date of the drop add period from a specific date to a specific number of class meetings (i.e., drop add period is closed for a specific class after the 2nd class meeting occurs). A notation should be added to all courses in the Oasis system warning that “Students not attending class the first day will be dropped from the course roster.” Significant efforts should also be made to publicize that students are expected and required to attend on the first day of class. A culture needs to be established on this campus that “Class begins on the first day of class.” Finally, all course syllabi should be posted online and be made accessible to students to aide them in the selection of courses and to alleviate the number of students dropping courses after reviewing the syllabus on the first day of class.

4.4 Establish uniform course evaluation questions for students in every university unit to complete at the end of courses, preferably in an online format. Include in the uniform course evaluation survey questions that relate to the course’s academic rigor and the instructor’s stimulation of intellectual curiosity, while making room for individual units to address concerns. Consider developing a mid-term evaluation form for the benefit of instructors.

COMMENTS: Ranked 4th out of 6 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. A set of <10 uniform questions should be included on the course evaluation survey. In addition, faculty members can select discipline/course specific questions from a bank of questions (apx. 200 questions to choose from). OISD should be responsible for studying and developing both the uniform questions and the larger question bank. The University should also encourage faculty to conduct open-ended mid-term faculty evaluations to be viewed and used by faculty only (not used for tenure and review process).

4.5 Foster the development of a course evaluation process that incorporates a comprehensive evaluation method like periodic peer-review wherein both students and faculty colleagues assess the rigor and quality of a professor’s instruction
COMMENTS: Ranked 5th out of 6 in priority. We recommend this be implemented, but suggest that the recommendation language be changed to the following: “Foster the development of a teaching evaluation process that may incorporate periodic methods like peer-review and/or a teaching portfolio wherein both students and faculty colleagues promote the rigor and quality of a professor’s instruction.” The UGA Teaching Academy and OISD should be utilized in conducting these peer-reviews. The University should also encourage faculty to engage in and use new methods as part of tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review.

4.6 Develop and implement a plan to create an **Office of Service Learning** to coordinate, promote, and expand service learning and international service learning opportunities across the campus.

COMMENTS: Already implemented.

**Additional Comments and/or Recommendations:**

We support all of these recommendations and note that they are already ordered in the proper prioritization.

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**Break-out Group 5**

**Improving Faculty Development and Rewards**

*Members: Peggy Kreshel (Chair), Trish Kalivoda (Vice Chair), Wyatt Anderson, Gregg Coyle, Anne Dupre, Helen Epps, George Francisco, Mark Huber, Thomas Lauth, Margaret Robinson, Charlotte Wallinga, Scott Weinberg*

5.1 Require First-year students to participate in the **First-year seminar** program. These seminars should emphasize the importance of learning and academics as well as expose students to top faculty.

COMMENTS: We recommend this be implemented.

5.2 Establish a university-wide **faculty reward system** that encourages, recognizes, and rewards high quality undergraduate teaching.

COMMENTS: Ranked 2nd out of 7 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. The reward system should be a university-level funded system, managed by schools and colleges, for recognizing high quality undergraduate teaching by any type of teacher. It should be focused on undergraduate teaching; however, graduate-level awards may be appropriate for schools without undergraduates, e.g., Law School, Veterinary Medicine, etc.
5.3 Grant teaching credit or other substantial rewards for faculty who teach first-year seminars or other academic enhancement courses.

COMMENTS: We recommend this be implemented with caution. Consider carefully before changing the current system from faculty volunteers to on-load assignments. Such a change could impact the availability of distinguished faculty to teach the seminars and consequently lessen the program’s appeal to students. We support the implementation of recommendations 5.3 and 5.4, but emphasize the difficulties in securing funding and in implementing.

5.4 Rather than assessing faculty loads by courses (e.g., four course teaching load), teaching loads should be evaluated by hours (twelve hours) to encourage the teaching of one and two hour seminars.

COMMENTS: We recommend this be implemented with caution. Consider carefully before changing the current system from faculty volunteers to on-load assignments. Such a change could impact the availability of distinguished faculty to teach the seminars and consequently lessen the program’s appeal to students.

5.5 Initiate a structured leave policy for tenured faculty members.

COMMENTS: This recommendation is the top priority for this section. We recommend this be implemented. However, we recognize that it would require a change in USG policy and multi-million dollars to implement. Based on availability of sabbaticals at peer institutions and on comments from faculty candidates, we believe periodic sabbaticals are crucial for recruitment and retention of high quality faculty. Faculty could apply and be selected at college or school level (funding from University). Strong consideration could be given to sabbaticals whose end products impact teaching and the sharing of knowledge.

5.6 Reinvigorate pedagogical training and communication on campus by expanding the role and resources to OISD (renamed as the Center for Teaching and Learning.)

COMMENTS: Ranked 3rd out of 7 in priority. We recommend this be implemented. We suggest that this Office be made a part of the Center for Teaching and Learning (formerly know as OISD) rather than creating additional stand-alone administrative unit costs. We concur with the renaming of OISD and encourage the expansion of its mission across campus. Expansion could include enhanced support for all categories of teachers including instructors, part-time faculty, etc.

5.7 Examine all Task Force recommendations in light of faculty support and rewards.

COMMENTS: We recommend this be implemented.
We largely concur with all of these recommendations but have funding and implementation concerns.