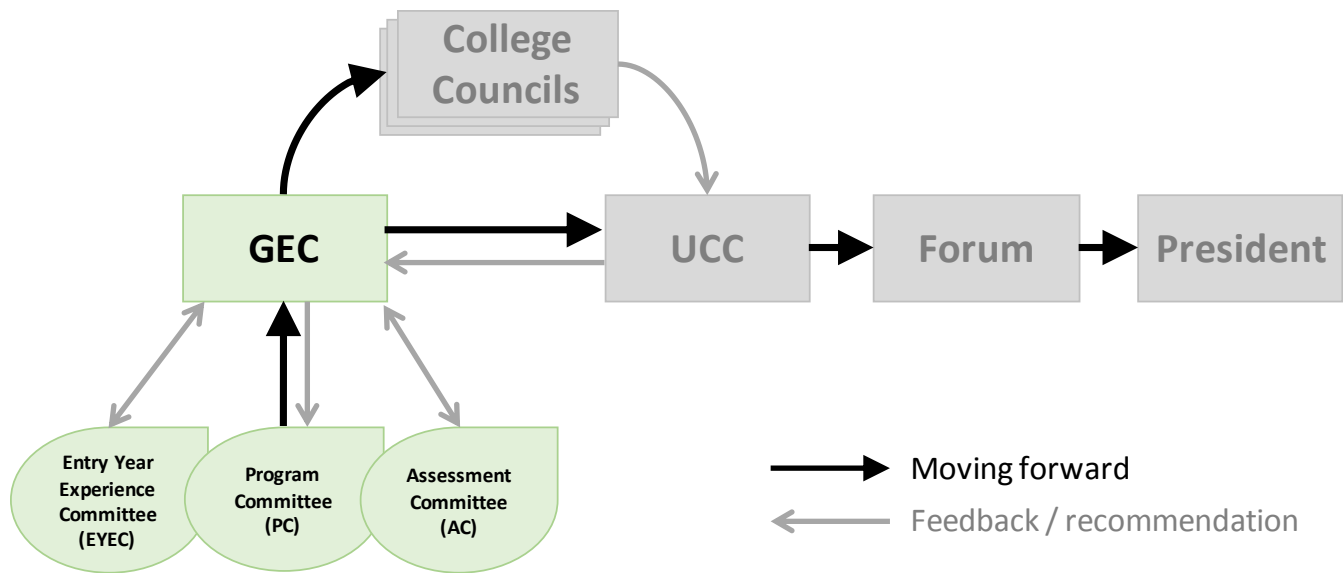# General Education Program Reform

1 OUR ENVIRONMENT

Liberal education is essential education because it prepares students "to think and communicate as professionals, to understand the societal and global context of their work, to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting and career to another, to recognize the ethical implications of professional practice, and to balance the various dimensions of their personal and professional lives" -- regardless of the professions for which they are preparing (PASSHE BOG Policy 1993-01).

The Program Committee (PC) of the General Education Council (GEC) has been tasked with developing a new liberal education program for the GEC to consider. As it does so, it must also respond to the:

1. *Middle States Commission of Higher Education report*, which suggested we add a "second writing course beyond the current Writing Intensive First Year Seminar" (Hefner et al., 2009: p14);

2. *External Review of the Writing Program at Shippensburg University*, which advised against building a "broad, one-size-fits-all" (p13) writing requirement and recommended, instead, that we take more organic approach and let "disciplines develop their own writing [objectives] and means to achieve them" (p15) with support from the English writing faculty.

3. Shippensburg University's *Academic Master Plan: 2013-2018* (AMP, 9/13/13), which directs us to:
    a. "establish a process and mechanism for the period review and revision of the general education curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of 21st century students and workers" (p7);
    b. ensure the forthcoming "entry-year experience and general education curriculum should be informed by and reflect one another" (p7);
    c. evaluate the current structure of the General Education Program and determine whether it continues to fulfill its role in the University's mission and make adjustments accordingly" (p20); and
    d. present recommendations "by fall 2013" and initiate implementation "by fall 2015" (p32).

4. PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors policies:
    a. *Policy 1993-01: General Education at State System of Higher Education Universities*. Adopted Jan. 21, 1993; Amended; Effective Jan. 21, 1993;
    b. *Policy 1999-01: The Academic Passport and Student Transfer Policy*. Adopted Jan. 14, 1999; Amended; Effective Jan. 14, 1999; and
    c. *Policy 1990-06-A: Academic Degrees*. Adopted Oct. 18, 1990; Amended Jul. 18, 1991, Apr. 11, 2002, Jul. 22, 2010, Jan. 19, 2012. **New definitions will go into effect Aug. 15, 2015**.

5. The GECC Assessment Subcommittee report, *Evaluation of the SU General Education Assessment Campaign, 2006-2009.*

6. The GECC report, *Spring 2008 General Education Survey.*

7. And last but not least, the public clamor for better value given the rising cost of a higher education.

The GEC.PC is preparing to kick start a campus-wide conversation about building a new Core Program. Every department, every program, and the student body at Shippensburg has representation on the GEC, so all stakeholders can participate in this conversation. Before a new program can be introduced and vetted, however, the flow of information and the decision-making process must be understood.

2 THE PROCESS FOR INTRODUCING AND VETTING CURRICULAR CHANGES

College Councils

GEC → UCC → Forum → President

Entry Year Experience Committee (EYEC)

Program Committee (PC)

Assessment Committee (AC)

→ Moving forward

→ Feedback / recommendation

3 AN IDEAL TIMELINE

Ideally, a new Core Program at Shippensburg University will begin in August 2015 when several new PASSHE BOG policies regarding degrees and liberal education programs will take effect. This ideal timeline will provide ample blocks of time for the GEC, the College Councils, the UCC, the Forum and the President to consider proposed changes and their impacts during Fall 2013, Spring 2014, and Fall 2014.

Present the reform process and an ideal timeline — 9/24/2013

GEC vote on process and timeline. — 10/29/2013

Present a discussion document of a new Core Program — 11/26/2013

GEC discussion of feedback, Round 1 — 1/28/2014

GEC discussion of feedback, Round 2 — 2/25/2014

Present a draft UCC proposal for a new Core Program — 3/25/2014

GEC vote: If pass, then submit the UCC Proposal for a new Core Program at Shippensburg University — 4/22/2014