Course Approvals:
This year the committee reviewed and approved over 76 proposals. Some of these were changes in competencies but many were new courses or new designations. The number of general education options available to students continues to grow.

September 2018:
1. CD1718157: Align COM 4XX Preproduction for Senior Project with W3 Gen Ed Competency
2. CD1718146: New Course: Art Appreciation Art 1XX (IC Competency)
3. HON 398: The Art of Bookmaking (CP)
4. HON 398: Medieval Mysticism (CT)
5. HON 398: Documentary Poetry (CP, W2)
6. HON 398: Breaking Bad: Drug Economics and Crime Theory (CT)
7. HON 498: Taoism, Tai-Chi, and Buddhist Meditation (IC)
8. HON 298: Mind-Body Health (HW)
9. HON 498: Biological Illustration (CP)

October 2018:
1. CD1718158: PSY 450 Revisions
2. CD1718149 ECO 213 Course Revisions
3. CD1718148 ECO 211 Course Revisions
4. CD1718129 Revised Major: Media Production

November 2018:
1. CD1819014: ART 117 (CP)
2. CD1819005: New Course - Non-Western Art History
3. CD1819023: WRT 132 Intro to Professional Writing (CP)
4. CD1819026: WRT 133 Intro to Writing Fiction (CP)
5. CD1819025: WRT 134 Intro to Writing Poetry (CP)
6. CD1819060: WRT 298 (W2, IL)
7. CD 1819019: MED 340 (W3)
8. CD1819020: MED 320 (CE)

1 Agendas and Minutes can be found online at http://libguides.wcsu.edu/gen_ed
9. CD1819018: MUS 380 (W3, CE)
10. CD1819017: BA in Music Culminating Experience
11. CD1819045: NUR 375 (W3)
12. HUM 298: Intro to Cultural Studies
13. HUM 298: Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age
14. HUM 398: Refugees Ancient and Modern

December 2018:
1. CD1819068: HUM 4xx Development and Humanitarian Ethics/Study Abroad
2. CD1819067: HUM 2xx Thinking about Race
3. CD1819064: PHI 2xx Engaged Philosophy: Peace & Justice Studies
4. CD1819029: HUM 2xx Immigration: Rights and Wrongs
5. CD1819031: HUM/HPX 2xx Approaches to Well-Being in Indo-Tibetan Philosophy
6. CD1819028: HUM 1xx FY for the Humanities
7. CD1819030: HUM/HPX 2xx Indigenous Spirituality & Environmental Activism
8. CD1819063: HUM 2xx Introduction to Cultural Studies
9. CD1819062: HUM 3xx Knowledge and Power
10. CD1819070: change gen ed competencies for PHI 240, 241, 242, 244, 245 (Change CT to W3)
11. CD1819069: change gen ed competencies for HUM 212 and HUM 213 (Change CT to W3)
12. CD1819061: change gen ed competencies for PHI 231, 232, 233, 234 (Change CT to W3)
13. CD1819051: PSY 412 Course Revision (CE, W3)

February 2019:
1. CD1819116 Art 448 Gallery Interactions align W3 Competency
2. CD1819117 Art 2XX Bookmaking with CP Competency
3. CD1819084 CHE430 for W3 and CE competencies
4. CD1819074 HIS 3XX Slavery and Abolition in the Atlantic World align W2
5. CD1819089 MAT 131 College Algebra for Teachers aligns with QR competency
6. CD1819090 HUM 3xx Advanced Cultural Studies align with W3 and CE
7. CD1819085 PHI 3xx/WS 3xx Women in the History of Philosophy align with W3 and CE
8. CD1819083 ECO 211 Course Revision Proposal aligns with CT
9. CD1819082 PS 3xx/WS 3xx Gender Justice and the State aligns with IL
10. CD1819081 PS 2xx Congress and the Presidency aligns with CT
11. CD1819071 ECO 213 Course Revision Proposal aligns with CT
12. CD1819086 DIMA 300 Revisions, including W3 competency
13. HON 298: American Sojourners,
14. HON 398: Americans in London,
15. HON 498: Intellectual Maze of Westworld,
16. HON 398: Flash of the Spirit
17. HON 498: Math, Literature, and Movies

March 2019:
1. CD1819140 – Align ED 340 with Tier III
2. CD1819132 – align Art 472, Art 474, Art 476, Art 478, and Art 479 to the CE Competency
3. CD1819122 - HUM/HPX 3xx Tibetan Buddhist Art, Philosophy and Culture for IC and HW
4. CD1819115 - THR 490 Senior Portfolio for Tier III - Approved
Assessment:
2017-2018:

Quantitative Reasoning:
Last year, 2017-2018, a committee of faculty who had taught QR classes, developed a rubric and collected artifacts in order to assess the competency. In the report that they report submitted to the committee in September 2018, they made no particular recommendations for curricular changes. They did however make the following comments:

For the future, we have the following hopes:

- That all four areas will be addressed more thoroughly and successfully in every QR course offered
- That student artifacts to be assessed should consist of a single applied question. This time around each artifact was an entire test or a substantial section of a test and so the ratings were less specific than we’d like.
- That all artifacts rated are rated by more than one faculty member, independently, so that inter-rater reliability can be calculated and reported.
- That when this competency is assessed next time all four outcomes have higher means.

At a follow up workshop in February 2019, the report and the comments above were reviewed. The attendees made the following recommendations for next steps:

1. Appoint an ad hoc committee to develop guidelines for QR artifacts submitted for assessment. These guidelines should be broad enough to include many teaching strategies
while establishing some basic information. A reader from another course/discipline should be able to reasonably evaluate the performance of the student in all four categories.

2. Make minor revisions to the learning outcomes to align with the rubric (application is assumed/built into the artifact rather than being a separate assessment category), to be in a more logical order, and to clarify interpret and explain.

3. Review the language of the rubric to better align with “cognitive outcomes”

4. No target scores were established, but generally speaking 2 or higher is a potential goal.

5. The sample size should be expanded for the next assessment.

They also proposed the following clarifications and updates to the definition of the QR competency.

**QUANTITATIVE REASONING COMPETENCY**

**Definition**
Quantitative reasoning is the ability to recognize, interpret, and use quantitative information in a variety of situations in order to understand and create arguments supported by quantitative evidence. Students possessing quantitative reasoning skills will be able to apply quantitative principles, theories, and methods to solve problems, draw conclusions, and make informed decisions based on quantitative information. Further, they will be able to communicate their ideas or conclusions in a variety of appropriate formats (i.e. using words, tables, graphs, equations, etc.).

**Outcomes**
Upon completion of the Quantitative Reasoning Competency, students will be able to:

1. Represent quantitative information in clear and appropriate forms;
2. Apply appropriate computational procedures to solve problems;
3. Analyze quantitative information to make judgements and draw conclusions, while recognizing the limitations of such analysis; and
4. Interpret quantitative information presented in textual, visual, or notational forms with reference to quantitative principles and theories.

At their May meeting, the committee ...

**Critical Thinking:**

In May 2018, the provost hosted a retreat to examine the definition of the Critical Thinking competency. The objective of the retreat was to, either revise the definition or to decide if the CT competency should be replaced with two different competencies, Logical Reasoning and Textual Analysis. The participants at the retreat recommended rejecting the change to two new competencies and recommended the following revisions to the CT competency:

**Proposed Revision**
Critical thinking (CT) utilizes textual analysis and logical reasoning and is, therefore, an intellectual and analytical activity process through which students develop the ability to recognize, examine, critique and synthesize arguments. It consists of two key components: acquiring the skills to assess the clarity, accuracy, relevance, and strength of arguments, and developing habits of mind to utilize those skills. Courses in critical thinking move beyond the mere acquisition of information to the examination of the nature and effectiveness of argument within a specific discipline.
An argument is a claim, proposition, opinion, or conclusion supported by evidence. Upon completion of the Critical Thinking Competency, students will be able to:

1. **Recognize arguments**: Students will distinguish between arguments and unsupported claims or opinions, and identify the central claim of an argument;

2. **Analyze arguments**: Students will determine the components of a given argument and their relation to the whole;

3. **Critique arguments**: Students will evaluate assumptions and the quality and reliability of evidence. They will apply relevant criteria for evaluating different types of arguments, including potential counter-arguments;

4. **Synthesize arguments**: Students will formulate good arguments, which justify positions by bringing together reasons and evidence in a coherent structure that provides persuasive support for a conclusion; and

5. **Apply arguments**: Students will apply critical thinking through a discipline-specific method.

The Committee on General Education approved these recommendations in September and forwarded them to the Senate.

2018-2019:

**Information Literacy:**

Development of an evaluation rubric for the Information Literacy competency was conducted at a workshop in March of 2019. A small working group of AAUP faculty met to discuss the competency as written, and craft an instrument which will specifically address the competency and its associated student learning outcomes; it will also take the observations of each IL course instructor into consideration. A second workshop is scheduled for May 20, 2019, where faculty will apply this newly developed rubric to a selection of sample assignments.

**Intercultural Competency:**

For the assessment of IC this year, there will be a workshop on May 29, 9:00-2:00, in WH 122. Any full-time faculty who teach courses with an IC designation are encouraged to attend.

**Goals:**

1. Share strategies for teaching and evaluating IC as it is currently defined and examine those strategies for commonalities and complications.

2. Determine what, if any, modifications should be made to the IC definition. Such modifications may include revising the IC definition, learning outcomes, IC with Cultural Awareness or some other proposal arising from our discussions.

3. Develop a plan for moving forward with modifications and/or assessment.

The results of the workshop will be brought back to the General Education Committee in September.

**Writing 1:**

Composition Coordinator, Dr. Michael Lewis, organized a full program assessment of student writing produced in WRT 101 and WRT 101P. The assessment session took place on 10 December 2018. Instructors were directed to pull five research essays with a range of "clearly passing," "Marginal," and "Not Passing" per section, as well as two to three random controls. The determinations of pass levels were based on the Assessment Tool for Research Essays for WRT
After a group norming session, each essay was blind read and scored by two instructors other than the instructor of record. This and future assessments are part of a larger effort to improve research writing skills across sections of WRT 101 and WRT 101P.

Assessment Cycle:

At the October meeting, the committee passed a motion indicating that:

*Fall 2021 will be the first year for a major structural evaluation of the entire general education program.*

The date was based in part on the following rotation for assessment of the general education competencies, which was then a draft proposal and was finalized in December.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>QR, CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>IL, IC, W1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>FY, HW, CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>SI, OC, W2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-2022</td>
<td>CE, W3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022-2023</td>
<td>QR, CT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Business:

Honors Council:

At the November 2018 meeting, the Honors Council submitted a proposal aligning their modes of inquiry with the general education competencies and asking that they be allowed to apply competency labels to their own classes. While the committee had no particular issue with the alignment, they were not so comfortable with allowing the honors council to approve their own courses. It was acknowledged that prior the current general education system they had enjoyed that privilege, but it was pointed out that the old system which was in place prior to 2016 was based along department lines and did not have defined student outcomes. Since the new system does have student-learning outcomes, all departments in all the schools must send proposals through the committee, and it is the responsibility of the committee to maintain the integrity of the general education curriculum, it was felt that the practice of self-approving courses was no longer appropriate. At the December meeting, the committee voted down a formal proposal to allow the Honors Council to apply their own designations.

Repeating Competencies:

In October, a motion was put forward to require students to repeat more than three competencies (outside of FY, W, and CE). This motion was tabled until we could get more information from the registrar’s office about how large an impact this might make. In April the registrar got back to the committee with the following information:

“I sampled 255 students with senior standing having 90 or more earned credits. I eliminated any student who was admitted to prior to the fall 2016 semester and those admitted under the old Gen Ed. The results are:

- 47 have met at least 4 competencies at least 2 times.
33 have met 3 competencies at least 2 times.
175 have not met the 3 competency requirement any more than 2 times.
Of course, we have not completed the semester so competencies will not appear for in progress courses and not all of these students will be graduating in May. It is interesting to note that there are 18.4% of the senior students with 4 or more competencies being met twice while the juniors have a larger percentage of competencies being met more than twice. That rate is 25.7%. This can be attributed to a larger number of courses with competencies approved. I am sure the committee will not be making any changes to the number of repeat competencies this year and we can certainly run this again after the semester is over."

Based on this information, and further discussion, it was moved and passed that this issue should be revisited in the 2020-2021 academic year when more information is available.

Changes to Faculty Handbook:

In September, the provost distributed a new form for submitting courses for general education designation. This new form should be included in the faculty handbook since the form currently there is still for the old general education system and had not been updated to be compatible with the new system that went into place in Fall 2016. The committee approved this proposal and forwarded it to the senate for approval and inclusion in the handbook. In April the provost came back with a similar proposal to update more outdated material in the faculty handbook.

General Education Designation Approval Process

In order for a course to be considered for a General Education designation, the submitting department must provide a copy of the Application for General Education Course Approval and they must make clear the components of the course that make it a general education course and not just a course from a given content area. In particular, proposals should specifically address the ways in which the course addresses the learning outcomes for the relevant competency (ies). All course outlines must include the learning outcomes of the general education competency designation sought. General Education competencies will be assessed on a rotating five year schedule. Faculty should expect to submit samples of student work relevant to the competency during assessment years. Per our bylaws this approval process applies to all course proposals seeking a general education designation including Honors, FDS, SIS, and Guided Readings. Follow the routing instructions in the Curriculum Proposal Process (Sharepoint).

Definitions and Learning Outcomes have been developed for the following areas:

- First Year Navigation (FY)
- Creative Process (CP)
- Critical Thinking (CT)
- Information Literacy (IL)
- Intercultural Competency (IC)
- Oral Communication (OC)
- Quantitative Reasoning (QR)
- Scientific Inquiry (SI)
- Writing Tier 2 (W2)
- Writing Tier 3 (W3)
- Culminating Gen-Ed Experience (CE)
Full definitions of the General Education Program and the Assessment Schedule can be found here: http://libguides.wcsu.edu/gen_ed

Application for General Education Course Approval is in the appendix of this handbook.

These changes were approved by the committee to be forwarded to the University Senate.

Clarification on FY Exemption:
In November, it was moved that there should be a set policy regarding students who complete their first year without completing their FY general education competency. In December, the committee approved the following motion:

_Students who fail to complete the FY competency in their first year at Western Connecticut State University will be excused from this requirement provided they have successfully completed 24 credit hours and have a GPA of at least 2.0._

Bylaw Changes:
At the March and April meetings, the committee discussed updates to the bylaws in order to make accommodations for electronic participation and voting. Ultimately, bylaw changes related to electronic voting and attendance as well as general editorial clarifications were brought to the committee at the May meeting:

_Revisions to the bylaws for the Committee on General education are highlighted below. In addition to a handful of typographical errors, the bylaws have been amended as follows:_

- All references to NEASC has been Replaced with NECHE
- Item II.F has been given a heading
- A&S has been changed to MSA&S
- Guidelines have been added for remote attendance and voting
- Guidelines have been added for email voting between meetings

_FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE COORDINATOR is no longer shouted, it is now First Year Experience Coordinator_