TO: The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

FROM: Semester Conversion Steering Committee

SUBJECT: 17-18 ASCSC 3: GE Units for Semester vs. Quarter

PURPOSE: Information for the Executive Committee and the Academic Senate

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In a recent letter (see attachment) from the Interim Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Mitch Watnik, to the Committee on Curriculum and Instruction (CIC), Dr. Watnik pointed out a potential problem with the number of GE units that a student might accumulate under Semesters vs. Quarters. In essence, a student might complete their GE requirements and still be below the minimum of 48 semester units required for GE. This could occur if a student completes their GE requirements under quarters, but adopts the semester catalog for GE; the conversion of quarter to semester units could leave a student below the minimum of 48 semester units. To rectify this potential problem, and to be consistent with the Student Pledge regarding semester conversion, Dr. Watnik asked CIC to create a policy where the minimum number of semester units required for GE would be 45 semester units, provided the student had completed all GE requirements. In response, CIC decided that a new policy was not required but, rather, the change should be implemented administratively and ExCom be informed of the change by the Semester Conversion Steering Committee.
ATTACHMENT

TO: Committee on Instruction and Curriculum (CIC)

FROM: Mitchell Watnik, Interim Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Academic Programs and Services

CC: Michael Hedrick, Director of Semester Conversion
     Glen Perry, Assistant Vice President of Special Projects
     Maureen Scharberg, Dean of Academic Programs and Services

SUBJECT: GE units for semesters vs. quarters

In 16-17 CIC 19, CIC noted that there may be an issue with units in General Education as the University moves from quarters to semesters. 17-18 CIC 17 allows students with rights to the quarter Catalog to use the semester Catalog for General Education. This poses the following problem. Suppose, for example, a student completes A1-A3, B1-B4, C1-C3, D1-D3, and E (52 quarter units) in General Education on the quarter calendar, but opts for the semester GE Catalog. On the semester Catalog, then, the student has 34.667 semester units of GE. After taking the 3 semester units each of B6, C4, and D4, the student has 43.667 semester units of GE courses and yet has fulfilled all the areas of GE, even though 48 semester units of GE is required. This is, of course, why the quarter system plan requires an extra GE course (namely, B5). Even if the student took a 4 quarter-unit (2.667 semester units) B5 course, the student would still be short of the 48 semester units of GE.

It is my understanding that semester campuses, when they encounter transfers from quarter campuses (such as a De Anza student transferring to SJSU), will say that the student met the GE units requirement if they completed the lower division GE pattern (including an extra lower division GE course, such as B5) under quarters and took their upper division GE under semesters. This amounts to a practical implementation of subsection 5.3.2 of Executive Order 1100 (revised); in our case, this would be implementing subsection 5.6.1.

I therefore propose that, to align with the student pledge, students who may be entitled to the quarter Catalog, but use the semester Catalog for GE, should be held to a 45 semester unit minimum for GE. (Students will still need to be certified for all areas of GE as mandated by EO 1100.) A freshman in 2017-8 might, through her cluster, complete all of areas A and E, as well as B1-B4 (for example) under quarters. That would give the student 28 quarter units (18.333 semester units) of GE. Under semesters, she could complete her lower division C and D, as well as her B6, C4, and D4, giving her 27 more semester units of GE. This student would meet the 45 semester unit threshold and satisfy all areas of GE described in EO 1100, which is why I would recommend the 45 semester unit threshold, rather than the 46 semester unit level described earlier.