Sonoma State University Academic Senate

REGARDING CSU EXECUTIVE ORDERS 1100 GENERAL EDUCATION BREADTH REQUIREMENTS – Revised August 23, 2017 AND 1110 ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND PLACEMENT IN FIRST-YEAR GENERAL EDUCATION WRITTEN COMMUNICATION AND MATHEMATICS/QUANTITATIVE REASONING COURSES

Resolved: That the Sonoma State University (SSU) Academic Senate object to the unworkable timeline for implementation of the revised Executive Order (EO) 1100 General Education Breadth Requirements and the new EO 1110 Assessment of Academic Preparation and Placement in First-Year General Education Written Communication and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning Courses; and be it further

Resolved: That the SSU Academic Senate further express its concern that the consultation process in both EO 1100 (revised) and EO 1110 reflects the Chancellor’s office lack of commitment to the principle of faculty authority to oversee the curriculum embodied in Section 3561(b) of the Higher Education Employee Relations Act (HEERA) and a failure to anticipate the extensive curricular and resource implications of EO 1100 (revised) and EO 1110 prior to their adoption; and be it further

Resolved: That the SSU Academic Senate affirm its commitment to diversity as embodied in the SSU Mission statement and express concern that the implications of EO 1100 threaten that commitment; and be it further

Resolved: That the SSU Academic Senate convey its concern about the implications particularly for lecturers of the extensive revisions to GE and English and mathematics development courses required by EO 1100 (revised) and EO 1110, including work available and entitlements, and the extra workload on all faculty the revisions will cause; and be it further

Resolved: That the SSU Academic Senate strongly urge Chancellor White to rescind EO 1100 and 1110 until sufficient evidence-based consultation with Academic Senates in the entire CSU has occurred, consistent with HEERA; and be it further

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to the Board of Trustees, Chancellor White, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Loren Blanchard, the Academic Senate CSU, and campus senate chairs.
Rationale

In August 2017 Chancellor Timothy White issued Executive Order 1100 General Education Breadth Requirements (revised) and Executive Order 1110 Assessment of Academic Preparation and Placement in First-Year General Education Written Communication and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning Courses. Both have significant curricular and resource implications for all CSU campuses. Given the extension granted to SSU by the Chancellor’s Office for implementation of EO 1100 (revised), those revisions will be required to go into effect in Fall 2019. The deadline for implementation of EO 1110 remains Fall 2018. Even with the extension for EO 1100 (revised), given the significant number of curricular and resource implications of both executive orders, the SSU Academic Senate has serious concerns about the implementation timeline for changes to campus GE programs and the adequacy of consultation with faculty prior to the issuance of the executive orders.

Campuses should have the autonomy and flexibility to design a GE program that serves their mission. Changes should be driven by campus faculty in service of that mission, not the result of an executive order that standardizes campus curriculum to the extent that it threatens campuses’ unique identity. SSU is currently undergoing a GE program review guided by its mission and unique identity as a public liberal arts institution. A major part of that effort is to protect the careful integration of major/minor and GE requirements that is a hallmark of our curricular design. Even with the year-long extension for implementation, the time and consultation needed to make the sweeping changes necessitated by the EO 1100 revisions across campus will be massive. Evidence from a similar process at CSU Chico indicates that a timeframe of four to five years is a necessary minimum.

The implementation issues for both executive orders are complex, require deep reflection and careful planning, and raise significant workload concerns. In particular, the implications of the EO 1100 revisions for SSU’s GE program are significant and extensive. Every area of SSU GE will be affected. In addition, given their close integration with the SSU GE pattern, programs that address multicultural issues will be significantly affected by the criteria for 3 and 4 unit courses (AMCS, CALS, ENGL, GER, LIBS, NAMS, PHIL, THAR, ECON, SOCI). Many of those majors/minors are in fields that address issues affecting underrepresented students and have a greater proportion of underrepresented students than other majors/minors. And cascading resource and programmatic effects will impact a majority of majors/minors, as well as distinctive aspects of SSU’s GE offerings, such as the Freshman Year Experience and Liberal Studies portfolio program.

In addition to workload increases for full-time faculty and staff to make these revisions, SSU will need to address the potential implications for the lecturers—as will the CSU as a whole—who teach the lion’s share of GE courses, including loss of work, effects on entitlements, and increased workload to revise existing courses as needed to comply with the revisions.

The call for feedback on the draft EO 1110 came in mid-May 2017, with a mid-June deadline for response. That timeframe coincided with the last week of class, finals week, and graduation. And we understand that in order to meet a self-imposed August
2017 deadline for issuing the revised executive order, the draft revisions to EO 1100 were reviewed over the summer by the Academic Senate CSU (ASCSU) Executive Committee and a work group made up of the current and former chairs and vice chairs of the ASCSU Academic Affairs Committee and the Chancellor’s General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC). We appreciate our ASCSU colleagues’ due diligence, but both processes were completely inadequate in terms of the quality and extent of feedback, and legitimacy, compared to what an in-depth vetting by the full ASCSU and campus constituencies would convey. The Chancellor’s Office’s willingness to grant an extension to implement the revised EO 1100 to SSU and at least one other campus is a positive development. But it does not in and of itself mitigate the larger concerns raised by executive orders issued with unrealistic implementation timelines and without adequate consultation with faculty who have the disciplinary expertise and legal responsibility to ensure the quality of the CSU curriculum.

This resolution expresses concern about the short timeline for implementation EO 1100 (revised) and EO 1110; the inadequate consultation with faculty about executive orders with such significant curricular and resource implications; and the impact of the EO 1100 revisions and EO 1110 on our lecturer colleagues. It calls upon Chancellor White to rescind EO 1100 (revised) and EO 1110 until such time as appropriate consultation has occurred.

Approved 9/28/17