**SWATeam Recommendation**

Name of SWATeam: Engagement

SWATeam chair(s): Ann-Perry Witmer Date submitted to iWG:

Recommendation title: General Education Board Sustainability Sub-group

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*For internal use only*: Date reviewed by iCAP Working Group:

Specific actions/policy recommendation: The Engagement Team proposes that a working sub-group be formed within the [General Education Board](https://provost.illinois.edu/about/committees/education-2/general-education-board/) of the University to address and support the implementation of a sustainability general education requirement proposed by the Illinois Student Government.

Suggested unit/department to address implementation: General Education Board

Rationale for recommendation: The General Education Board serves to “refine the categories of general education requirements for the campus, review course proposals, and review and recertify all courses approved for general education credit.” Therefore, our team firmly believes that by forming a task force within the Board to administratively pursue this endeavor alongside the Illinois Student Government, who already has the support of the Faculty Senate, the university can progress towards enacting the demands of university students, faculty and staff. Doing so will align with the university’s values of sustainability and the goals of the Illinois Climate Action Plan approved by Chancellor Jones. By forming this group in partnership with the Illinois Student Government, we can ensure that the students’ efforts are supported and heard in order to actualize their broad demand for a sustainability general education requirement for all university students.

Connection to iCAP goals:

6.1 Broaden the availability of sustainability education across the entire curriculum, beginning with first-year student orientation and continuing through commencement, with at least one of the proposed methods implemented by FY24.

7.1 [iSEE] Enhance the overall culture of sustainability on campus, and increase the number of certifications issued through the Certified Greener Campus Program by 20% each year from FY20 to FY24.

Perceived challenges: With respect to implementing the General Education Board working group, we anticipate the main challenge to be an allocation of human resources within the board. Because the demands in question may be lengthy and labor-intensive to address, the board may decline to comply with our requests due to their limited time and heavy workload. As for challenges facing the implementation of the sustainability Gen-Ed itself, we anticipate the main obstacles to be bureaucratic and administrative, as the recommendation requires implementing an additional requirement to students’ degrees, which university administration may be hesitant to instate.

Anticipated timeline of implementation: By Fall 2021, we predict that the General Education Board could formally designate the Sustainability Working Group. However, we anticipate that the changes to the degree requirement will not be implemented until Fall 2022.

Anticipated budget (identify if cost is up-front or continuous): We do not expect there to be any costs associated with the formation of the working group, as the General Education Board is already conducting work. We also do not anticipate any costs associated with the implementation of the Gen-Ed requirement.

Individual comments are required from each SWATeam member (one or two sentences):

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| Team Member Name | Team Member’s Comments |
| Ann-Perry Witmer | I strongly support ISG's efforts to institute a Sustainability Gen Ed and believe this SWAT team recommendation will provide the optimal path to its implementation. By investing responsibility for the initiative’s execution in the organization most familiar with Gen Ed requirements, this recommendation will be able to address administrative requirements while realizing a broader, more comprehensive understanding of the importance of individual and communal action in betterment and preservation of the environment. |
| Jie Hu |  |
| Sammy Yoo | I fully support the motion to pass a sustainability general education requirement for all students. The university is charged by our state to enhance the lives of people in Illinois, across the nation, and around the world. The scope of this mission absolutely includes addressing the threats that we are facing due to climate change. Approving this motion will move us one step closer toward equipping our students to be successful in fulfilling this mission. |
| Dave Guth | I strongly endorse this initiative to implement a sustainability general education requirement. I also support the recommendation to form a working group within the General Education Board in order to ensure the program feasibility and implementation across the Campus. It is worth noting that Illinois Student Government has already passed a motion in support of this initiative. |
| Kate Gardiner | I support the idea of a sustainability general education requirement for all incoming students and support the recommendation that a working sub-group be formed within the General Education Board to discuss the idea and what it would look like for the University of Illinois.  |
| Keilin Jahnke | I support this recommendation that a working sub-group be formed within the General Education Board in order to discuss and enact a sustainability general education requirement for undergraduate students at Illinois. |
| Miranda Johnson | I am in support of this recommendation. I believe that sustainability plays a role in every major and career path, and it’s vital that students are exposed to the possibilities that lie in studying sustainability. It also will expand the knowledge-set of students as they graduate so they can be more effective in their field of choice. |
| Hiba Ahmed | I am in support of this recommendation to add required sustainability course for all incoming students. Students should leave this campus understanding how their field of work has social and environmental impacts. This will help inform students’ decisions of their future careers and ensure that they have a lasting positive impact beyond their time at the University of Illinois. |
| Fina Healy | I support adding a sustainability course requirement for all incoming students. Students should learn how to incorporate sustainability into their majors. This will make them more competitive for their future careers and give them an edge up for the future career market.  |

Further explanation and background (can be supplied in an attachment):

[Illinois Student Government Resolution](https://uofi.box.com/s/530ssbd5pt3g2l70autkuuno3i3qitl2)

Comments from consultation group (if any; these can be anonymous):

Bill Stewart, General Education Board Committee Member:

“A couple comments to consider:

· Sustainability is a big tent which is both a plus and minus. It’d be worthwhile to identify a definition of sustainability upfront as either an amendment to your proposal or in some document that you send forward. My experience with cross-campus conversations on sustainability is one of turf-battles and narrowed definitions by some disciplines, and the opposite of anything goes and kitchen sink with other disciplines. It’d be meaningful to put sharper “teeth” into the definition prior to starting your next step. The “whereas….” clauses start at this, and although I suggest something more explicit about them as being definitional. I think for you and me, we know sustainability topics when we see them – however not everyone is so wired and many people who are experts in sustainability do not have a gen-ed mindset that would cover all undergraduate students.

· As a technical point, the results of the student survey at the end of this proposal are fantastic. I really appreciate the evidence. With MS-Word and other translating software given to adapting figures and labels and axes, Consider dropping them into the proposal as a jpg or something that won’t get distorted. In addition, I could read your charts well, or at least wasn’t sure of the color keys and what was 1/3, 2/3 and 3/3; along with label the response categories on the bar graphs of what is the meaning of 1, 2, 3, and 4. I think I know, but it’s just me guessing.

· Another technical point, what were the methods for your survey? Did you send this to all UIUC students? Just those registered for sustainability classes? A few details on methods and population of sample would help contextualize, and facilitate the interpretation.

· In terms of the gen-ed board forming a sub-committee to discuss the feasibility and implementation, this is a great idea. We have a model for doing so with the relatively new addition of US minority culture to the campus gen-ed. There’d be a model we could draw on. I’m fairly certain you’ve kept Kevin Pitts and Chadly Stern (the assoc prov for educ; the chair of gen ed committee) in the loop, and encourage you to continue doing so. They could provide you with advice that would give the proposal a fair hearing.

· I believe this proposal would go to the faculty senate first, and then to the gen ed board, however not certain of process. However you may be asking for a friendly feasibility study from the gen-ed board as insight to the discussion at the faculty senate. These last two bullet points are just ‘thinking out loud’ as I know how circumspect you’ve been with your deliberation.

The above are points come immediately to mind, and I’ll give further reflection to your questions. I also know we have a full plate with just 3 meetings left for the year (next one is this Monday), so it will likely be pushed-back to next academic year especially if need to coordinate with faculty senate or other committees.

My department is Recreation, Sport and Tourism, and I’m happy to be endorser of this proposal.”