

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes - September 15, 2026

Call to Order – Meeting: 3:45 pm, Zoom

Voting Members Present: Ashley Fox, Amber Giacona, Jim Lindsey, Hannah Monney, Leslie Plumlee, Brian Elliott, Ethan Vietze, Emily Britton, Lori Alexander, Robert Welsh, Elizabeth Groves, Melanie Autin, and Alex Olson. (13)

Advisory Members Present: Merrall Price, Danita Kelley, Stuart Burris, Leanne Coder, Jennifer Hammonds, Rheanna Plemons, Crissy Priddy, and Jessica Dorris

Guests: Dan Clark, Stacey Forsythe, Angie Jerome, Fadi Sibai, Roberta Darnez-Pope, Matt Pruitt, Audra Jennings, Michael Carini, Nadia Klen, Robin Ayers, Andy Mienaltowski, Matt Shake, Eric Kondratieff, Scott Lasley, Dawn Wright, Jenny Stewart, Brooke Gross, and Rob Hale.

Approval of Minutes, April 21, 2026 – Approved by email (9/9)

New Business

Curriculum Agenda

Gordon Ford College of Business				
Code	Title	Status	Contact	Received
1792	1792: Business Law Certificate	Edited	lmm74813	9/2/2026
Motion to Approve – 1st/2nd: Lindsey/Autin Discussion: Coder explained a friendly amendment <i>Friendly Amendment: SLO # 1 Discussion, Coder explained, text changed to “Students will demonstrate knowledge of legal principles applicable to business”.</i> Vote: Approved (11/11)				

Ogden College of Science & Engineering				
Code	Title	Status	Contact	Received
ANSC 321	ANSC 321: Comparative Anatomy	Edited	plb36852	9/2/2026
Motion to Approve – 1st/2nd: Autin/Giacona Discussion: None Vote: Approved (12/12)				

Other new business:

Adding another student representative to the UCC

Motion to Approve – 1st/2nd: Autin/Giacona

Discussion: Fox discussed that it was brought up based on new committee OAI. Explained that it was requested by the SGA. The student would be a voting member.

Vote: Approved (10/1)

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes - September 15, 2026

Big Red Gen Ed Proposal: [CLICK HERE for document](#)

Motion to Amend the BRGE (Olson Proposed Amendment – Appendix A) – 1st/2nd:

Olson/Lindsey

Discussion: Olson discussed the rationale behind the email that was sent.

Remove Civic's from SB category and create a new category for Civic's, OAI should oversee building SLO's.

Stacey Forsythe asked for clarification about the motion.

Lindsey supports the amendment, does not support Dr. Price's email to send back to the committee.

After speaking to committee members, he feels they fulfilled their charge and brought us a resolution/proposal.

Rob Hale, he didn't realize we could amend a proposal before it was moved forward, asked Dan to clarify that as parliamentary rule.

Dan Clark, explained

Fox stated she doesn't think it our job to make substantial changes to a proponent's proposal.

Autin explained the process and how the workgroup considered everything that was brought forward by the open forums/questionnaire.

Ethan Vietze (student rep) asked about the six hours of social and behavioral sciences would still and did it have to be 2 different disciplines. He supports the smaller Gen Ed, in his opinion, he believes students are wasting time that could have been going toward your majors.

Olson responded.

Forsythe discussed the process that was made by the workgroup not the colonnade committee.

Olson made a point about the substance of this motion, apologizes that he didn't send in a timely manner, so people had time to review. He stated if we move forward with the proposals without the amendment, that three of the five largest AP categories that students seek to transfer credit will not have a place in the new general education program.

Hale talks about the healthy debate between Price and Mienaltowski in chat that a core procedural issue that he thinks needs to be resolved before people vote. He's asking for clarity on what happens to the amendment.

Lots of discussion on what happens based on how the vote is done.

Price stated one reason this was acceptable is this is a compromise. It should be fair. She is very concerned about losing six hours of general education does to the university as a whole. Someone should be looking at the financial analysis to see how this will affect incoming money to the university.

Forsythe wanted to make it clear that she is against this amendment and explained why.

Motion to close debate and vote – 1st/2nd: Giacona/Autin

2/3 vote to close debate and move forward.

Vote: 10 yes – 2 no

Vote on Motion to make amendments (Alex's motion): 4 yes – 8 no

Motion to approve BRGE as written:

Discussion of original proposal: Price, when we vote on this, it doesn't automatically mean it goes to SEC and to Senate. We have the possibility of voting in several ways. One is to approve it, in which case it does. One is to turn it down, in which case it does not. Another is to refer it to a committee of our choice. Recommends referring to another committee.

Olson asked to refer to the committee's AQ and Budget, so it doesn't get delayed. No support for this.

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes - September 15, 2026

Vote: Approve (11 yes – 1 no)

Motions for Senate

Motion #1: The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) moves that the Faculty Senate adopt the following special rule:

The Faculty Senate shall debate the WKU Big Red Gen Ed Program proposal. The Senate may discuss it as long as it desires but no amendments shall be accepted from the floor. At the end of the discussion and two readings, the Senate shall vote. A yes vote will signal adoption of the WKU Big Red Gen Ed Program proposal. A no vote will send the Program proposal back to the UCC for further consideration.

Motion to approve – 1st/2nd: Autin/Giacona

Discussion: Lindsey said no; Hale did say this is how it was done in colonnade to be clear. Gross, asking about amendments on the floor.

Clark added comments when it hits the senate floor.

Vote: Approved (yes -9, no - 3)

Motion #2: The UCC moves that all currently approved Colonnade courses be decertified from automatic inclusion in the WKU Big Red Gen Ed Program. The UCC and the General Education Oversight, Assessment, and Improvement Group (OAI) will devise a process, criteria, and timeline for evaluating courses for inclusion in the new program. All new courses proposed for inclusion in the WKU Big Red Gen Ed Program will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate curriculum process (by department and college curriculum committees) before being sent to OAI for review. Once reviewed by OAI, proposals will be sent to UCC for review and approval (with or without OAI's approval).

Motion to approve – 1st/2nd – Olson/Giacona

Discussion: Hale – This is how we did it last time. Ethan Vie – asked about how it goes forward to senate.

Vote: Approved (yes – 11, no – 1)

Motion #3: The UCC moves that the current Colonnade program be closed to new courses or revisions upon approval of the WKU Big Red Gen Ed Program by the Board of Regents.

Motion to approve – 1st/2nd: Olson/Giacona

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved (yes - 12, No - 0)

Motion #4: The UCC moves that the Faculty Senate urge the University to provide adequate staffing, funding, and training for implementation of the WKU Big Red Gen Ed Program.

Motion to approve – 1st/2nd: Giacona/Olson

Discussion: Hale shared that the provost has vested about 30,000 towards improving Gen Ed by providing stipends/course release.

Vote: Approved (yes - 12, No - 0)

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes - September 15, 2026

Next Meeting: October 20, 2026

Adjourn @ 5:30pm – Motion to Adjourn – 1st/2nd: Giacona/Autin

Respectfully Submitted
UCC Recorder
Jessica Steenbergen

Appendix A:

Proposed Amendment to the Big Red Gen Ed (BRGE) Program

This memo explains the rationale for a proposed amendment to the Big Red Gen Ed (BRGE) proposal under consideration by UCC. The amendment is as follows:

Remove Civics from the Social & Behavioral Sciences (SB) and place it in a new category. OAI shall be tasked to write SLOs for the new category. Increase total hours to 36.

Current Proposal (33 hrs.)	Amended Proposal (36 hrs.)
<u>Composition (3 hrs.)</u>	<u>Composition (3 hrs.)</u>
<u>Writing in the Discipline (3 hrs.)</u>	<u>Writing in the Discipline (3 hrs.)</u>
<u>Quantitative Reasoning (3 hrs.)</u>	<u>Quantitative Reasoning (3 hrs.)</u>
<u>Communication (3 hrs.)</u>	<u>Communication (3 hrs.)</u>
<u>Social & Behavioral Sciences (6 hrs., including 3 hours civic engagement)</u>	<u>Civics (3 hrs.)</u>
	<u>Social & Behavioral Sciences (6 hrs.)</u>
<u>Arts & Humanities (6 hrs.)</u>	<u>Arts & Humanities (6 hrs.)</u>
<u>Natural & Physical Sciences (6-7 hrs.)</u>	<u>Natural & Physical Sciences (6-7 hrs.)</u>
<u>Synthesis (3 hrs.)</u>	<u>Synthesis (3 hrs.)</u>

This amendment supports the Colonnade Work Group's conclusion that civics is vital to a modernized general education, but it further recognizes that civic engagement is a skill spanning the arts, humanities, and sciences. The proposal positions it as a domain that must satisfy state-mandated learning outcomes in the Social & Behavioral Sciences. In so doing, it reduces student flexibility for articulating credit into a category that includes 5 of the top 10 AP classes—AP US History (#2), AP World History (#4), AP US Government (#5), AP Psychology (#6), and AP Human Geography (#9).

The prospect of legislative action

Civic learning is currently a focal point of intensive legislative activity, including in Kentucky (see below). There are now 14 states with civic learning mandates. Critically, these mandates tend to be highly prescriptive in ways that are incongruent with the SB category and may soon require another overhaul to general education.

Civic engagement is not a social scientific discipline

The Big Red Gen Ed proposal eliminates the World History (SB) requirement in Colonnade and replaces it with Civic Engagement. However, civic engagement is not simply a subfield of History or Political Science. Across higher education, scholarly organizations devoted to civic learning have worked to foster deliberative dialogue and engaged citizenship through experiences that allow students to foreground their own values and beliefs while

respectfully encountering divergent viewpoints. The resulting courses typically merge civic literacy with approaches rooted in the humanities.

One major civic engagement initiative is the American Democracy Project, a multi-campus coalition of over 300 campuses launched in 2003 by the American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU) to help undergraduates learn about and take part in American civic life. In January 2026, the American Democracy Project chapter at MTSU secured a “Celebrate America!” grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project director [explained to WGNS](#), “We are thrilled that this grant offers us the opportunity to bring the humanities out of the classroom and into the public sphere, using the Semi quincentennial celebration to spark conversations about freedom, democracy, and the ideas that are foundational to our American life.”

Civic education reaches across all three of Kentucky’s core domains: Arts & Humanities (AH), Social & Behavior Sciences (SB), and Natural & Physical Sciences (NS). Indeed, the [Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education](#) (CPE) provided a Democracy Across the Curriculum [model syllabus](#) “designed to form a template for a democracy and civic engagement course in any academic discipline, from accounting to zoology, in which students explore, understand, and practice small-d democracy the way this is done in your discipline.” One example of this breadth is the citizen science movement, which extends civics into practices such as environmental stewardship: “Since its launch 2004 at Yellowstone National Park, AASCU’s American Democracy Project’s [Stewardship of Public Lands \(SOPL\) program](#) has introduced AASCU faculty, staff, and administrators to the complexities of public land management and its connections to democracy, sustainability, and civic engagement.”

Another multi-campus civic engagement initiative is [Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life](#), which frames its mission around the arts and humanities: “We envision a world of expansive social imagination, constructed by multiple ways of knowing, where people work together to nurture vibrant and joyful communities.”

Civics at the University of Kentucky

The University of Kentucky Core general education program includes 6 hours in a Citizenship category, divided between Community, Culture, and Citizenship in the USA (3 hours) and Global Dynamics (3 hours). State flagships have widely been tasked with implementing civic learning mandates.

Courses in this category include Engineering, Theatre, Anthropology, History, Education, Geography, and more, including interdisciplinary prefixes such as CAS (Companion Animal Studies) and COF (Kentucky Coffee Lab). These courses do not count toward CPE domain requirements in SB, NS, or AH, but instead aim to help students synthesize skills. The overarching Citizenship category in the UK Core has one SLO:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of citizenship and the process for making informed choices as engaged citizens in a globalizing and interconnected society.

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes - September 15, 2026

The subcategory for “Community, Culture and Citizenship in the USA” requires:

1. Navigate the discussions and tensions around citizenship, rights, privileges, and responsibilities expected of those living in the United States.
2. Understand historical, societal and cultural differences—with attention to regional, national or cross-national contexts and their influence on civic rights and responsibilities.
3. Demonstrate effective and responsible participation in society.

The subcategory for “Global Dynamics” requires:

1. Navigate the discussions and tensions around citizenship in a globalizing and interconnected society.
2. Evaluate how structures or institutions intersect with global trends and dynamics considering multiple factors (e.g., local cultural, social, political, financial, economic factors)
3. Demonstrate ethical approaches to resolving individual and collective decision-making in a globalizing and interconnected society.

These learning outcomes bridge domains and create space for exciting hybrid approaches. Carving out a Civics category creates room to merge with Synthesis if UK’s 6-credit model becomes the state standard.

Risk of legislative action disrupting the BRGE program

National pressure is growing for universities to mandate civics, including in the Kentucky legislature. WKU is investing significant time, energy, and money into reimagining our general education; failing to account for this growing movement will likely leave us in a position where we will be forced to make major changes to the BRGE program very soon after this process is complete.

As of 2025, 14 states require civic education at the undergraduate level. In Kentucky and neighboring states, we have already seen movement on this issue. The Kentucky General Assembly established a [Center for American Civics at University of Kentucky](#) in the 2026 session, with a mission of fostering “civil discourse and constructive debate.” Numerous other states have created similar institutes, including Iowa, Ohio, and Arizona, where such institutes were developed just ahead of or in conjunction with a civics mandate. A bill mandating the [Institute of American Civics at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville](#), to develop model curriculum was approved by education committees in both houses last spring and will likely be reintroduced in the next session. The Kentucky General Assembly has also considered a bill mandating American history and government, something that is likely to come up again.

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes - September 15, 2026

Nationally, most of this legislation is highly prescriptive. Several model bills include elements that aim to hold universities accountable to the legislation, including making the courses and syllabi that meet the requirement public. The organizations promoting this legislation are also policing its implementation. For example, the [Goldwater Institute](#) filed FOIA requests for course proposals and other documents and is applying pressure to public universities to adhere strictly to the civics mandate. One senator in Ohio [described](#) the state's new American civic literacy mandate as written to block "any of this funny business which the academicians will definitely attempt to do, putting courses in there that don't meet the intent of the legislation that we passed."

Splitting Civics into a separate category would prevent the SB domain from being entangled in these mandates.

Expanding the BRGE Proposal to 36 credits

The BRGE reduces WKU's general education program from 39 to 33 credits, with the goal of enhancing the 4-year completion rate and competing with other Kentucky universities who have reduced their general education programs.

This amendment proposes a more modest reduction to 36 credits. However, this change may be offset by enhanced access to AP and Dual Credit transferability. Students with college credit in Psychology and World History, for example, could apply both to the general education program in the 36-credit version, but not in a 33-credit version with a strict American Civic Heritage mandate.

In addition, there are many examples of growing institutions with much larger programs. Middle Tennessee State University requires 41 credit hours, including 6 hours in Human Society & Social Relationships, 8 hours in Scientific Literacy, and 6 hours in History & Civic Learning. Notably, MTSU has seen [two years of enrollment increases](#) even though the border state agreement with Kentucky means that students could choose to enroll at a Kentucky institution with in-state tuition. Further afield, the University of South Florida has a 36-credit general education program and has seen [a record-breaking increase in total applicants](#) over the past decade. Similarly, Texas State University requires 42 credit hours and has seen a [7% increase](#) over the past year.

Finally, a robust Civics category can be a centerpiece of the Big Red Gen Ed program. A 2023 [Chronicle of Higher Education survey](#) revealed that 68 percent of respondents believed that developing a well-informed citizenry was one of "the most important things colleges do" but just 31 percent believed that colleges were doing a good job at this task. The BRGE program is an exciting opportunity to build credibility and legitimacy with the community while also protecting the ability of students to articulate transfer credits in the leading domains of AP and Dual Credit study.